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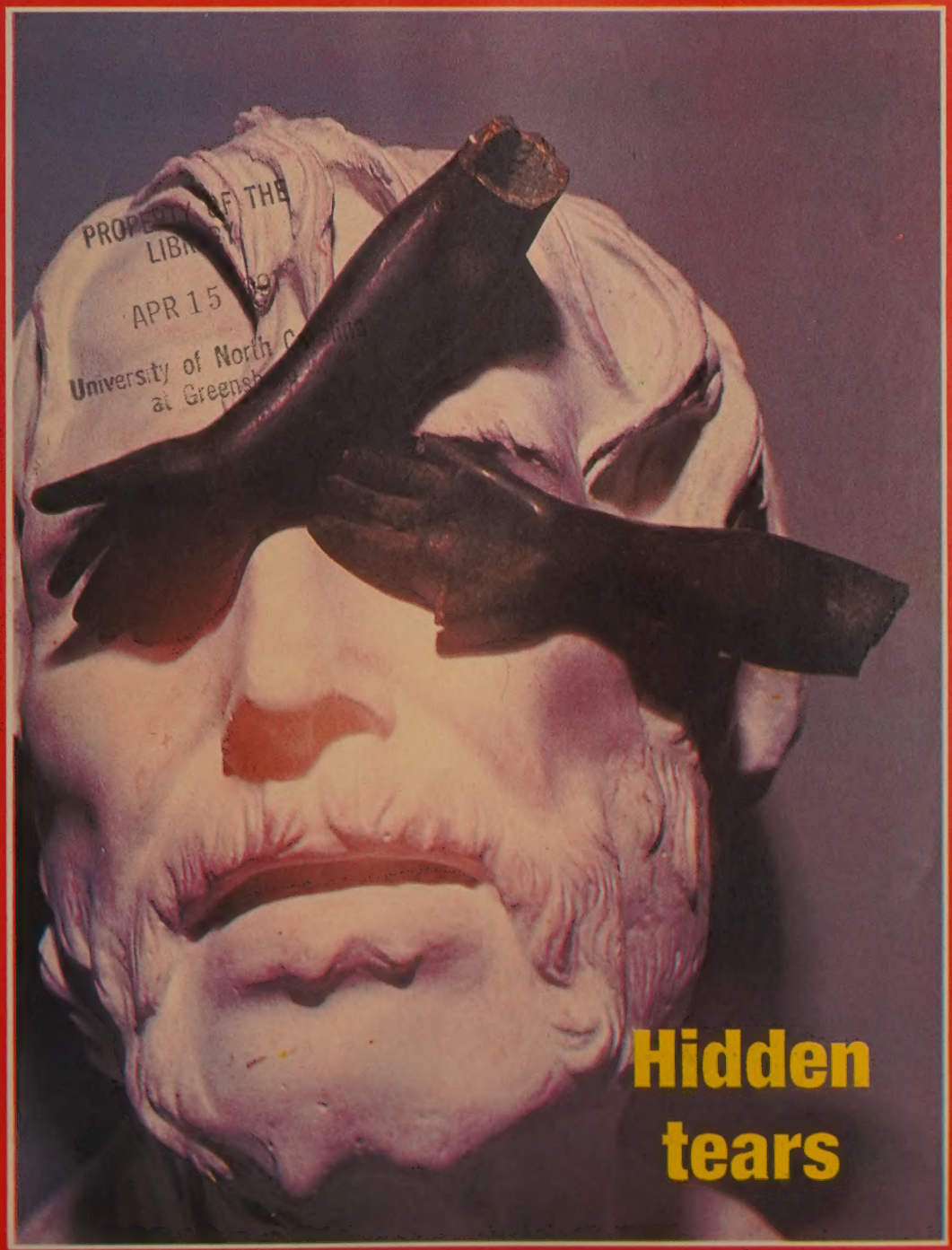

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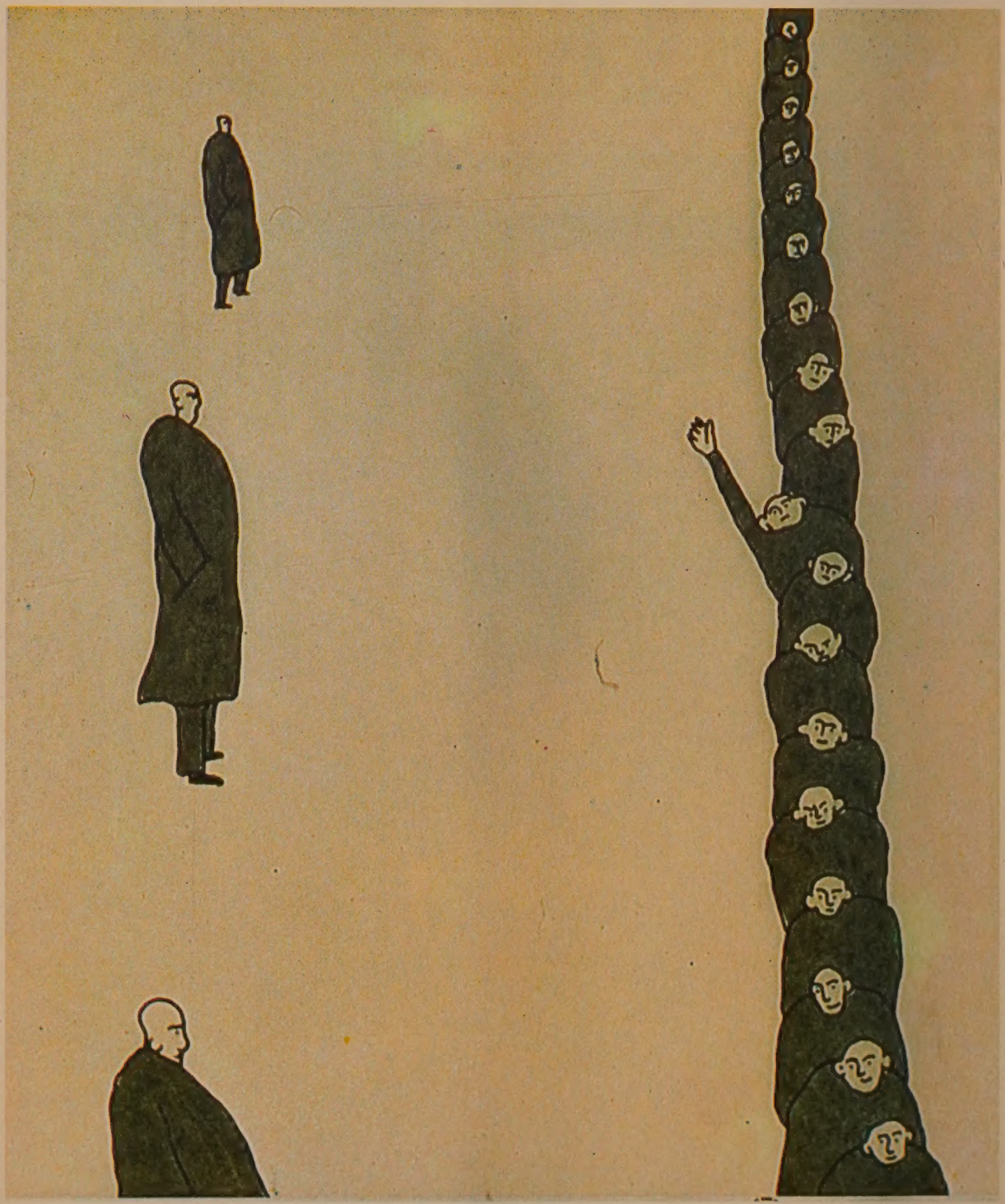

Here I am!

ALEXANDER DJIKIYA

A SOVIET WEEKLY
OF WORLD AFFAIRS

NEW TIMES

No. 6, 1991
Founded 1945

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From our mailbag

■ I read the article by Gennady Ariyevich entitled "Back to the future?" (No. 43/90). I enjoyed the author's frankness, which so accurately captured the spirit of incomprehension in the left wing people in Great Britain about what is happening in the USSR. But it seems to me that the article idealizes our life over here. For one thing, during his short trip the author could not experience the worry that so many people have here about where they are going to sleep or how they are going to eat or clothe themselves. Our suicide rate, especially among young people, has shot up. Gennady Ariyevich visited this country in the privileged position of a guest and could not but have been oblivious to our very well hidden poverty. But our way of life involves a heartless and uncaring attitude towards the poor.

I have been to the Soviet Union many times and I don't think my vision was as rose-tinted as that of our older generation socialists. When I last saw Moscow two years ago, I found people in low spirits, shortages and housing problems. But I did not see people sleeping in boxes or begging in the streets; nor did I hear of old people dying of cold or young people hanging themselves in jail because they feel society does not care and has nothing to offer. I did not feel that you were in possession of that spirit of socialism in the way that I thought you were thirty years ago. Nevertheless I realized that you had newly inspired hope for the future. Is it possible that this is gone already?

Socialism is, to me, about caring for people. Capitalism is about greed. However it is wrapped up, that is what drives it. So, you have got to find other new ways of organizing society rather than contemplate the old ways that have let us down.

George Hutchinson
Southampton,
Great Britain

■ I read the article "Tin Gods," by Tatiana Ivanova, and would like to say the following to the author.

In the centre of Leningrad there is a monument to the woman who twice committed regicide, a husband killer, a usurper of power, who turned a million of free peasants and Cossacks into slaves of serfdom, who allegedly abolished the autonomy of the Ukraine and annexed Kurlandia, who, finally, was a slut, paying for her pleasures from the state treasury. But she also expanded and strengthened the Russian Empire, and during her reign the Russian nobility enjoyed its Golden Age, thus, she became known as Catherine the Great.

And also in Leningrad there are two monuments to a murderer and libertine, that unscrupulous politician who deceived both enemy and ally, who built his capital over the remains of thousands of Russian men and created a system of spying and

Afterword to the criticism

■ Issue No. 50/90, in its section "People," featured information about Armenian writer Zory Balayan and the reaction to his activity by the President of Azerbaijan SSR A. Mutalibov and the Baku press. Having cited the accusations of "anti-Azerbaijani propaganda" and "the stirring up of inter-ethnic discord" leveled against Zory Balayan, your magazine noted: "The writer known for his activities in defence of the environment, lyrical stories about the Russian North and essays on the history of Armenia, has become a target of harsh criticism."

Unfortunately, because of the conflict around Nagorny Karabakh, in the past years both the Azerbaijani and Armenian press have been free-tongued. Your reproach is well-deserved, although it could be addressed to both sides.

At the same time, your publication inevitably leads the reader to the conclusion that the criticism itself of Zory Balayan is, in principle, unfounded, and the President of the Republic and the Baku press are given an unsightly image of those who are blinded by an unrighteous wrath and are ready to fling mud at the writer/lyric poet only because they don't like his position on Nagorny Karabakh.

In this connection I would like to give you some excerpts without commentaries from the book by Zory Balayan, *The Hearth*, that was published in Yerevan in 1984. The book caused a sensation in Azerbaijan, and, following numerous protests by the public, has been withdrawn from sale, becoming a prelude to the ensuing tragic events.

About Azerbaijanis and Turks (like many other Armenian authors, Zory Balayan identifies these two kindred, yet different peoples): "cut-throats," "professional killers" (p. 9), "the common enemy" of Armenia and Russia (pp. 10, 11), "vandals" (pp. 16, 18, 67); "the Osman recidivists," "the creatures of the modern neo-fascism" (p. 22); "a handful of nomadic strangers" (p. 43); "the ancient enemy of the Russian and Armenian peoples" (p. 277); "the wild hords of nomads destroying on their way temples and books" (p. 298).

The excerpts given above are enough for the reader to gain an objective understanding of who is "free-tongued," who is conducting a "campaign" (and what kind of campaign) and who is kindling inter-ethnic discord. In your publication the position of the president of the sovereign republic and the republican press has been presented to many thousands of readers in a prejudiced and tactless way. It arouses one's pity the more so, as both in this country at large and in Azerbaijan your weekly enjoys a reputation of an objective publication.

Eldar Namazov,
Chief of the Department
of Political Science,
Institute of History of the Azerbaijan SSR
Academy of Sciences

Is it possible to violate human rights in a place where they have never existed?

In Moscow I didn't see people begging in the streets...

Is it worth while to spit upon the grave of a dethroned idol?

Drawing by Viçtor Bogorad

police terror, the ruler from whom Stalin borrowed more ideas than he did from Karl Marx. And yet he created the Russian Empire and thus became known as Peter the Great.

Everyone knows this without any secret documents coming to light. But the monuments continue to exist, and people demand that their cities be given back their old names – Petersburg and Ekaterinburg. So don't Lenin, who restored a collapsed empire, and Stalin, who expanded it, deserve the same? Or maybe those who were killed after 1917 are people, and those who were killed before the revolution are not? By the way, it is exactly the same people who catapulted the portraits of the "leader," that catapulted the icons before, after they had been told that there was no God and they felt themselves to be free, although before that they had been believers for thousands of years. Evidently, it is a purely Russian trait – to spit upon the grave of a dethroned idol.

Yu. Nedlin
Leningrad, USSR

■ In issue No. 49/90 I read a letter by the Bulgarian journalist Dimitr Kostov saying that Soviet newspapers are now sold in Bulgaria for hard currency only, and that many of his countrymen do not have the opportunity to get hold of Soviet journals.

I have a subscription to *New Times*. Of course, it is nice to have all the issues of the magazine at home. But after I read the magazines I could send them to anyone who would like to have them – only give me their addresses. I am looking forward to hearing from you. Maybe other readers will also be willing to render our foreign friends such a service.

T. Pinchukova
apt. 1, 11 Ul. Metallistov,
Yagodnoe, 686230, USSR

■ On more than one occasion your magazine has written about the unknown burial places of Japanese POWs in this country.

In 1945-1948 I lived at the Belukha mine in the Olovyaninsky District of the Chita Region. I remember when they brought Japanese prisoners to our area. We children exchanged bread for fountain-pens and other articles with them, by throwing these things to each other over the barbed wire. Later on the Japanese began to work in the mines together with Russians, one of whom was my mother. Once my sister had a pain in her ear, and a Japanese man gave her an ointment for it – it soon got better. When some of them died they were buried near the Russian cemetery, but that did not go on very long, after a while someone prohibited their burial. They began to dig graves near the camp's territory where the soil was solid rock, and the burial places were very shallow. I don't know whether they are still there. The work in those mines was so hard that people died after three years of working there. My mother worked there for a very short time, hence she lived till 74.

Zinaida Datsuk
Bratsk, USSR

Once again – political prisoners

■ The fact of the existence of political prisoners in the Soviet Union is hardly doubted by anyone. The question is how this fact should be explained away. During the second International Conference on Human Rights in Leningrad, in which I took part, there emerged, two main trends in the interpretation of that problem.

Radical human rights defenders and politicians (the *Ekspress-Khronika's* editor Alexander Podrabinek, editor of the magazine *Glasnost's* Sergei Grigoryants, the leader of the Democratic Union, Valeriya Novodvorskaya) are at one in linking the continued political repressions with perestroika.

According to them, terror is an integral part of the Soviet system in general and perestroika in particular. In the past, under Stalin we had mass repressions, after that, under Brezhnev they became more localized, and today the terror has again undergone a modifiation, but has not disappeared altogether. As one of the members of the Democratic Union put it, we have a different tradition of interpreting law: man is regarded not as a sovereign subject possessing by birth certain inalienable rights, but as an object that may or may not receive these rights from the state. Another member of the Democratic Union said that human rights had never been violated in this country because they have never existed. This rhetorical phrase is, however, somewhat questionable: in my view, human rights have always existed, for one can be conscious of his rights under any regime.

There is another explanation for the existence in the USSR of political prisoners, something I support. Political prisoners are a relic of the past, and in no case this fact should be linked with perestroika. It is inadmissible to propagandize any separate incidents as it is done, for example, by the newspaper *Ekspress-Khronika* that regularly publishes selections of reports about the persecution of distributers of the independent press (I used to sell newspapers myself and I can tell you this: if I were detained not for selling *Ekspress-Khronika*, but for selling scarce panty-hoses, the reaction of the authorities would be the same: a fine).

Andrei Novikov
Rybinsk, USSR

Compiled by Tatiana Chernova

POLITICAL LIFE

Do we want to understand the President?

What neither the reformer of socialism nor the nation could have foreseen...

The expression "socialist pluralism" was frequently used in the early years of perestoika. This strange hybrid of terms is the best possible reflection of the state of mind characteristic of our time.

Internationally accepted pluralism could not have been anything but "socialist pluralism" when adopted in this country, a pluralism that incorporates all the features of socialist ideology with its one-dimensional vision of reality and the militant spirit of intolerance.

Attacks from the left and the right

Not long after perestroika began, it turned out that the ruling Communist Party which sowed the seeds of glasnost and truth was not able to control their growth or to impose limits on the doses of truth it allowed to be known to society. Even the reformer of socialism, Mikhail Gorbachev, who sincerely believed that heterogeneous democracy could be put into the Procrustean bed of the socialist political system, could not have foreseen that the processes he had unleashed would develop so fast, ruining the Communist system at home and in Eastern Europe. However, life has demonstrated that once emerged, heterogeneity starts expanding and exceeding the confines prescribed to it, and that it is a futile business to try and set the limits of freedom in an awakened society....

Having flung open the gates of freedom, Gorbachev believed for some time that his ideas of perestroika would be so popular among the masses that the masses would not think of anything but the implementation of perestroika plans within the limits of what is known as the socialist choice. Gorbachev seemed to be the happiest man on Earth when, during his numerous tours across the country, he saw crowds of once intimidated people raise their voice and become increasingly vocal. "The nation has been set in motion"... Soon, however, the roses of perestroika started growing the sharp thorns of economic problems and political conflicts and the idealistic faith in the imminent success of the perestroika efforts died. At the same time, along came the realization that the ideas and practice of perestroika had to be protected. Today, when the crisis is rapidly worsening, the republics are demonstrating open disobedience, and separatist aspirations and crime statistics are climbing, Gorbachev is trying hard to get back at least half the power he wielded in April 1985 when the Politburo elected him General Secretary.

How could it happen that the man who earned world praise for his rejection of authoritarianism and violence as the means of solving conflicts has found himself in the situation when he has to resort to these methods, foregoing his convictions? This question puzzles many people in this country and abroad. Various reasons are provided to explain this. Some point at personal authoritarian propensities the President is alleged to have been expertly concealing until very recently, others regard Gorbachev's turn as nostalgia for the time of the old methods of Communist rule, still others accuse Gorbachev of renegation and of being a puppet in the hands of the "right-wing forces" and the military-industrial complex. Each of the above suggestions is open to debate, but it appears that such views are either too superficial or too politicized or come from people with no firm convictions. More convincing is the viewpoint according to which Gorbachev the President, concerned with the potentially explosive and unpredictable progress of perestroika, has to progress along a path different from the one Gorbachev the reformer thought he would travel along when he introduced his freedom-loving ideas during the years of relative political stability and order.

IS GOING ON
WHAT
WILL • BE

Drawing by Victor Kazachek

In an excessively politicized society, like the Soviet Union of today, many people tend to see political ghosts behind any developments. Nonetheless, it seems strange that not only the common people of this country who have been trained to "look at the very top" for decades, but also the greater part of the most enlightened intellectuals cannot escape the temptation to seek the answer to the question "What's happening to us?" at the very top. It is only a handful of people who try to look for the answer "down below where civil life is" (Hegel).

Today the easiest thing to do is to label Gorbachev "a dictator" or to push him towards dictatorship. Many ambitious politicians are cashing in on criticisms of Gorbachev, or are deriving moral satisfaction from criticizing him. In our ill-managed and confused country Gorbachev plays the role of the "switchman" blamed equally by the right and the left. While the left are emphasizing Gorbachev's sharp turn to the right, the right accuse him of selling off Communist principles to the West and pro-democracy forces. As the right and the left are drifting to extreme viewpoints, it seems to them that Gorbachev is also drifting, in the opposite direction, of course. The drama of Gorbachev's position is in the fact that under the circumstances he has no choice but to remain in the centre, thus making his team and himself too static and unable to keep abreast with the dynamic and drastic developments in the crumbling empire. Besides, sometimes Gorbachev lacks the necessary political flexibility.

By virtue of his strictly centrist position, Gorbachev is displaying firmness in his determination to combine the presidency with the post of the General Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee. He continues to believe that the Communist Party still plays a stabilizing role and helps preserve order in the country. He seems to sincerely fear that the media campaign to discredit the CP, the exodus of Communists from the party will result in further disintegration of society. At the same time he is no less sincere in his fear that the counterattack of the CP hard-liners may bury his reformist innovations and the very "Gorbachev phenomenon."

The results of the January 1991 extended plenum of the CPSU Central Committee and the CPSU Central Control Commission show that the president's fears are not groundless. Anyway, many speeches at the plenum made the democrats seriously worried because they pressurized the President under the disguise of "the struggle against anti-socialist and anti-communist ideology," into restoring the status quo. The democrats are looking for ways to protect themselves. However, the democrats' efforts to woo Gorbachev and the centre over to their side cannot be described as totally futile, but if the democrats do not drop their tactics of anti-CPSU attacks and do not assume the viewpoint of statehood, evolution and tolerance, the results may be tragic for all of us.

The main thing the President needs today is the support of the left-wing radicals, who distanced themselves from Gorbachev leaving him no choice but to seek support in such institutions as the Armed Forces, the KGB and the militia. After the tragic events in Lithuania, the left-wing radicals made a big noise about Shevardnadze's warning that "dictatorship was just around the corner," but unfortunately did not heed Shevardnadze's main point which he emphasized by saying that "the democrats have dispersed." If the left-wing radicals continue to cling to their superficially attractive anti-centre stance, soon the calls against democrats themselves will become heard at mass meetings. If this happenes, we will enter a new stage, the one of "developed socialist pluralism."

Our heritage

The real reason behind the democratic reformer's gravitating to authoritarian rule is not the reformer's personality, the "conservative" role of the General Secretary of the CPSU Central Committee nor even the influence of the powerful hard-liners. The real reason is the rapid progress of perestroika. Most people have realized that the totalitarian herit-

age must be demolished. On the other hand, today's society is unable to do this due to the "genetic code" it has inherited from the past. Although scholars continue to debate the existence of "memes" (memory genes) of historical experience, there is no doubt that at least on the behavioral level we have not travelled far from the cluster of features described by Alexander Zinovyev as characteristic of Homo Sovieticus.

Remarkably, the Bolshevik ideology does not only have a lot of devoted advocates in this country today, but has penetrated our subconscious and is influencing our behavior even in everyday conflicts. The tremendous amount of problems that this country has accumulated does not really matter. What matters is that most problems climax in antagonism. If the problems reach the critical point, dictatorship will become unavoidable. At the same time, we do not see any way to solve the problem, because we have inherited militant materialism and militant atheism from the Bolshevik ideology. Perestroika did not only liberate our minds. It also liberated from fear something that the masses have been taught to accept for decades: intolerance of and hatred for real, potential and imaginary enemies.

The ideology of militant materialism spread in the masses by the founding fathers of Bolshevism has become part and parcel of this society's existence. Very probably, when he wrote his article "On the Significance of Militant Materialism" in 1922, Lenin could not imagine how tragic its tenets would be for the nation. As a Marxist, Lenin knew that in the social life militant materialism was the midwife of violence. After the revolution and civil war were over, it seemed that it was no longer necessary to advocate the use of violence against the defeated class, and that materialism as one of the visions of the world would return to where it belongs: scientific debates. However, even in 1922 Lenin remained what he had always been: a revolutionary. He could not be appeased until there were no intellectuals left in this country who did not share the viewpoints of materialism and atheism. Lenin dreamt of a society of total materialism and proclaimed materialism an "indicting," "militant," "unflinchingly exposing" force engaged in "untiring atheist propaganda."

Lenin's comrade-in-arms, Leon Trotsky, gives an answer to the question of why militant materialism became the creed of Bolshevism. Trotsky believed materialism "allowed one to stand firmly on the ground" and militancy was necessary to liberate people from doubts and mobilize them for the struggle against the class enemy. In his article Lenin completely approves Trotsky's views. Trotsky was even more outspoken when he said that to be a militant materialist was "to feel that you do not have any subjective hindrances to the struggle for the future, but there are only objective, real hindrances and resistances which must be escaped, or overcome, or destroyed, depending on the conditions of the struggle."

Militant materialism has become a part of the Soviet social practice since Lenin and Trotsky published their ideas about militant materialism in the journal *Pod Znamenem Marksizma*. From ideological indictments and persecution of intellectual "lackeys" of bourgeoisie and "graduated flunkeys of clericalism" whom Lenin suppressed by banishing them from Russia, and to the countries of bourgeois democracy, militant maaterialism became the tool of repression against thousands of external and internal enemies, educating the masses in the spirit of hatred, intolerance, suspicion and squealing. The idea spread among the populus... The "meme" of militant materialism met with the gene of human aggressiveness never to part. Atheistic propaganda accompanied by a chorus of lofty words taught people that the material was superior to the spiritual, masses were superior to the individual, the will was superior to reason, and the action was superior to the motive. As a result of this massive propaganda Soviet people have developed a baleful disease of spiritual nihilism which is becoming a normal reaction now that the ideological blinkers are taken off and the sense of fright is gone.

Can the disease be cured?

To answer this question, we must radically change the widespread belief that the root of all evil generating conflicts between individuals and whole groups of people from Central Asia to the Baltics is a combination of objective circumstances and conditions: the "system," poor supply, ill-considered policies, the Stalin nationalities policy, the war of parties, laws and sovereignties. Meanwhile, the main source of all our tragedies, **the spirit of militant materialism,** has only transformed, not disappeared in the years of perestroika, however energetic we might be in denouncing our past. We are all looking for the culprit. One can understand the intolerance and militancy of common people who fight at shops to get a pound of state-subsidized sausage, but how can one account for the militancy and intolerance of our political and spiritual elite who are putting up battles, unseemly for representatives of the intelligentsia? Is there any way to explain why the democrats are already fighting not only Communists, but each other too? Why are not only people but also different religious denominations warring with each other? Why armed force is increasingly often resorted to as an instrument of criticism?

"God save us from such prosperity... otherwise we will degenerate into a society of mutual love," wrote Bolshevik Vorovsky to Bolshevik Olminsky in the 1920s. Obviously, many of today's "spiritual leaders" fear such degeneration and try hard to politicize people's emotions on all levels instead of bringing calm to their souls. It was only yesterday that thousands of people discharged their emotions by blaming Communists. Today people blame democrats for whom they voted themselves. Not surprisingly, in the context of total confusion generated by our brand of pluralism with no goals, faith or rules, common people, and not the right-wing hard-liners, demand "strong rule." They are scared by the prospect of a free market economy, because they feel that the current war of some against some may, in the absence of a strong ruler, develop into a war of all against all. If such a war begins, then, as Thomas Hobbes wrote, our only hope will be that the real threat to our survival will activate the self-preservation instinct and this instinct will replace all ideologies returning us back to the way of civil concord, dialogue and social contract. Meanwhile, the struggle goes on...

Yuri Furmanov

Armour as a substitute for law

Lev Yelin

Current events and the two ministers' order

While the Military Procurator's Office is busy concluding the investigation of the June 1962 killings of workers in Novocherkassk; while those who gave orders to use armed force to quell a peaceful rally in Tbilisi in April 1989 are still unknown; while the two months officially set as the deadline for the investigation of the bloodbath in Baku in January 1990 are hopelessly past; while the investigation of the Vilnius tragedy is only just beginning – a de-jure decision has been taken to deploy troops in the streets of Soviet cities: on a permanent basis....

A joint army-police venture

The Presidential Decree "On Cooperation of the Militia and Units of the Armed Forces of the USSR with the Purpose of Enforcing Order and Combatting Crime" was issued a month after the joint order by the Minister of Defence and the Interior Minister "on organization of joint patrol service"... The ministers' order came earlier than the decree of the President who is also the Commander-in-Chief, but perhaps there is logic in it? An onlooker gets the impression that Gorbachev's decree was a retroactive attempt to give some legal weight to the two ministers' order, that the decree is a shield protecting Ministers Yazov and Pugo from attacks by the legalists.

The words of General Rodionov, commander in the Tbilisi operation of April 1989, that the army must not be used in settling internal problems, sound like a piece of ultra-left heresy with the background of the developments in the Baltic republics and the recent decrees and orders.

The two ministers' order was issued on December 29, but was not published until the end of January and first joint patrols appeared only on February 1. Thus, the events in the Baltics occurred somewhere in the middle of this period and, naturally, gave rise to rumours. Many democrats believe there is a strategy to enforce order. The Baltics were No. 1 target, Russia is the next. Official statements to the effect that no additional contingents or combat vehicles have appeared in the streets of Moscow and other cities provide little comfort. Actually, "restoration of order" does not require the troops' everyday presence in the streets, but rather the possibility of deploying armoured vehicles, on a perfectly legitimate basis, at any time and in any place when the law enforcers believe they are necessary. The two ministers' order is viewed as a menace also by possible strikers and by those who have got used to holding thousands-strong rallies by purely constitutional methods and without incident. Whatever official assurances may be, demonstators will never feel safe again: everybody saw armoured vehicles dispersing rallies in Vilnius...

This reaction was not difficult to predict. If the ministers are really concerned what the reaction to their orders may be, they could have afforded not to make their order secret. The decree on the monetary reform which withdrew from circulation all 50 and 100 ruble bank notes had to be secret, of course. Otherwise the shadow economy dealers would have had enough time to convert their capital into smaller banknotes. But what could the criminals have possibly done if they had known in advance about the armoured vehicles' planned deployment?

There is one more question: How does one fight organized crime with armoured vehicles? This question puzzled the Soviet Union's Mafia-buster, Alexander Gurov, the newly appointed head of the Organized Crime Department at the USSR Interior Ministry during a question-and-answer session at the Supreme Soviet of the Russian Republic. Obviously, the new patrols can be effective only in fighting street crime, robberies and hooliganism and will never be able to replace a professional detective in the majority of other cases. However, according to Interior Ministry statistics, street crime, robberies and hooliganism make up only 15 percent of the total number of crimes. In 1990 the absolute number of street crimes did increase, but the growth rate dropped by 14 times as compared with 1989. It seems that he joint venture of the army and the police is being created at the wrong time and with a purpose different from what was officially declared.

When the whole nation was busy exchanging the suddenly worthless 50 and 100 ruble bank notes, Alexander Gurov appeared on TV to inform viewers that Mafia bosses were holding urgent meetings trying to find a way to get rid of the invalid money. One wonders what the Mafia's reaction was to the decision of the Defence Ministry and the Interior Ministry to fight organized crime "...With the help of stand-by alert units at every garrison: a company or a battalion with organic arms and ammunition."

The Field Manual tells us that the battalion can operate on a 12-kilometre front: a couple of thieves' dens may easily happen to be inside the 12-kilometre zone, of course. However, Col. Rutskoi, a veteran of the war in Afghanistan and People's Deputy of the Russian Federation, believes that the anti-crime effort is nothing but a disguise.

The choice is made

In any case, the army's participation in the anti-crime effort is a measure that admits of different interpretations, and the version that the government decided to use all means at its disposal to combat crime at the critical moment does not sound very convincing. It would be more effective if the government heeded the telegram from the former Interior Minister, Vadim Bakatin, who said that to fight crime better, the police needed more advanced equipment and policemen had to be insured against all risks involved in their profession.

If the purpose of joint patrolling is different, then what is this prupose? Is the government toying with the public opinion? But the public at large is so scared of rumours about a coming military coup

Free market may send crime statistics sky-rocketing, we are told. But will we live to see a free market? *Photo by Dmitry Borko*

that companies and battalions in combat gear out in the streets will only be welcomed by advocates of dictatorship who make up an insignificant segment of society. Why all the fuss? According to a recent Interior Ministry report 969 grave crimes are committed in the USSR per every 100,000 of the population. The corresponding ratio in Germany is 7,359 crimes per 100,000. In other words, the situation is not as bad as we are made to believe.

Obviously, the answer is the leadership's broad political alliance with the military. Very probably, the nation's leadership views this alliance with the military and the KGB as a temporary measure necessary to check the Baltics and Russia which have gone too far in their quest for sovereignty. However, in future the leadership may find it extremely difficult to say good-bye to its allies of today. After the events in the Baltics, the Kremlin seems to have lost the democrats' trust for good and the very first drop of blood spilled by the military – if only as a result of a provocation – will rob Gorbachev of any room for political manoeuvre. In this sense, the risk that army patrols may clash with civilians is also a personal political risk for the President.

Gorbachev's December 26 Decree allowed officers of the Interior Ministry and the KGB to enter the "premises used by citizens for private and other forms of enterprise." This provision is a direct violation of the constitutional right to the inviolability of home (after all most private producers in this country turn out their goods at home).

It must be recalled that last summer the Supreme Soviet of the USSR sanctioned the law-enforcing bodies to tap phone conversations if necessary for the investigation, thus blasting another constitutional guarantee – the secrecy of telephone communication. Anti-crime efforts across the world often result in restricted personal freedoms and rights, but in this country human rights violations are **the opening stage** of the crime-busting campaign...

Officials have voiced hope that the KGB will be more successful in restoring order in trade, because the KGB is less corrupt than the OBKhSS (the Interior Ministry department dealing with the "theft of socialist property"). It would be nice to share this hope, but the reason for corruption is not the personal qualities of the OBKhSS men as compared with the secret police, but the system itself which makes it more profitable for those engaged in trade to sell goods on the side, bribing the law-enforcement officers who could upset such illegal deals. If about twenty well-paid KGB spies have changed sides and defected to foreign secret services seeking better material benefits, there is no guarantee that their rank-and-file colleagues who receive far less pay will be able to resist temptation. Actually, corruption in the KGB is only a matter of time and of the scale of the secret police's involvement in the world of trade...

A difficult question...

Speaking of the Baltic republics, Soviet lawyers often use the term "non-legal space," meaning that the differences between the Union and republican laws and confusion among the law-enforcement bodies, which do not know whom they must report to, generated a legal vacuum attracting crime. However, the whole country is becoming a non-legal space, in a different sense of the term, though.

Graduate lawyers are sadly enumerating the incongruities of the recent decrees and orders, each of which is either an invitation to a legal dispute or a mind-boggling problem for law students. As for those who must monitor the observance of the law and the heads of law-enforcement agencies, they do not dare to form their own opinions until the word comes from the very top.

The day Boris Pugo was appointed Interior Minister, he was asked to specify the names of the members of the Baltics' underground National Salvation Committees. Pugo called the question "improper" and refused to give a legal assessment of such committees. Nikolai Trubin, Procurator-General of the USSR, failed to answer the direct question: "Does the activity of the National Salvation Committee accord with the Constitution of the USSR?" The procurator mumbled: "You've got to know the situation... Really, I cannot say anything definite..." The KGB chief, Vladimir Kruychkov, was asked whether such committees could be viewed as subversive organizations. "This is a difficult question which requires much looking into...," was his reply.

That was before January 22, when Mikhail Gorbachev said

that no public organizations, committees or fronts were allowed to appeal to the Armed Forces in political struggle and that all political forces had to struggle for power exclusively by constitutional means. These words ended the indecision...

After the two ministers' order was abolished, the situation repeated itself. General Procurator Office refused to comment on the order, saying that it had not yet received the text. The Justice Minister Lushchikov says he "is not familiar with the problem" and has never seen the text. The Constitutional Supervison Committee politely declines having anything at all to do with the problem...

Our lawyers would have been quicker in passing their judgement, had a similar order been issued by two Lithuanian ministers and supported by Landsbergis' decree....

The figure of new laws passed by the Supreme Soviet, which Supreme Soviet Chairman Lukyanov is so often pleased to quote, must not decieve anyone; the law is not becoming the supreme force in society. Top-level leaders who are either lawyers by education themselves or have lawyers among their aides, frequently violate the law. Kronid Lyubarsky, editor-in-chief of the emigré magazine *Strana i Mir* calls this phenomenon the "totalitarian care": the state knows what is good for its citizens and if there is a law obstructing the way of the state's doing good, all the worse for the law...

What about the lawyers sitting on various committees and subcommittees? One would agree, of course, Soviet justice which had sanctioned mass killings, usurpation of power by one party, retroactive laws etc, cannot be expected to become a stalwart custodian of legality in such a short time.

Actually, the Constitutional Supervision Committee was to submit its conclusions as to how constitutional the Yazov-Pugo order is, no later than Wednesday, February 6. Theoretically, the Committee could suspend the order, but there is every indication that it will once againt opt for half-measures.

"Give us saboteurs!..."

Strange things happen in the non-legal space. The Supreme Soviet of the USSR and the KGB are playing with the term "economic sabotage" as they would with a volleyball: neither agrees to claim the copyright or explain what exactly today's meaning of these words is, echoing the lawlessness of the past. The President was expected to explain the meaning of his decree. However, Gorbachev, confined himself to setting up a Law-Enforcement Committee under the President of the USSR "in order to radically step up the struggle against economic sabotage" and other crimes.

Let me remind the readers that not so long ago the All-Union Anti-Crime Committee was established and Anatoly Lukyanov was appointed its chairman. Even judges were instructed to cooperate with the Committee, although the judges' business is to administer justice not to hunt for criminals. Anyway, the Committee died peacefully, without having ever done or reported anything. Today a new Committee is being formed, a measure which one member of the old committee called "ritual gesture intended to calm the public down." The only hope is that personal qualities of the head of the new committee will add some weight to it.

The new crime-buster is former dean of the School of Law at the Kemerovo University, Yuri Golik, 38, until very recently Chairman of the Law and Order and Anti-Crime Committee at the Supreme Soviet of the USSR.

The press and lawyers made lively discussion of Golik's inaugural statement to the effect that "he who fights crime in plastic gloves winds up in a plastic bag." A staunch advocate of the Union Treaty, Golik believes that "two sovereignties in one state is utter absurd." Only a watermelon contains many seeds." Commenting on the events in Vilnius, Golik said only that "the people who were crushed by the tanks had been pushed under the tanks by those standing behind them." When he speaks about law, order and anti-crime efforts, Golik is outspoken: "Any force can be crushed by a greater force." The task he put forward at the end of December sounds promising: "The main objective is to restore elementary order. We must begin with restoring order in our minds."

However, the thing to begin with is obviously the much-wanted definition of "economic sabotage." The Moscow OBKhSS chief, Shestopalov insists that so far "neither the OBKhSS nor the KGB have revealed any facts of premeditated activities designed to undermine the national economy or the constitutional system." Shestopalov believes that "the national economy is in a crisis and this situation offers broad opportunities for economic crimes." On the contrary, Golik insists that such a thing as economic sabotage "does exist. The proof of its existence is the crisis in the national economy. No **sound and working economic system** disintegrates **without reason**"(my italics – L.Ye.).

However, it is doubtful that the search for reasons why the national economy which had worked so well under Brezhnev and Chernenko, started disintegrating, will lead Yuri Golik to the den of saboteurs and mafiosi...

The danger of a free market economy?

The anti-crime drive often looks like a propaganda attack on the free market economy. In his January interview Alexander Gurov warned that "the criminal world was waiting for a free market and wanted it badly." He also insists that the setting up of free economic zones will result in an uprsurge of crime. Yuri Golik echoed Gurov when he said that free market would bring more crime.

Very probably, the leadership is not worried about crime proper in the transition period, but the possible reaction of the people to the liberalized and upwardly spiralling prices and closures of non-profitable factories and plants. In this sense the joint patrols are a step to deal with possible free maket troubles. On the other hand, if there is a decision that free market is something alien and that the socialist ideals are more important, it would be very useful to present galloping crime as a consequence of free market relations and to doctor the crime statistics accordingly. One must only warn the people that if the country collapses without free market, crime will be even more cruel and terrible than it is now.

On January 31 the President of the All-Union Confederation of Trade Unions of Cooperative Workers said that the decree on measures to fight economic sabotage "put the economic life of this country under the control of police and the KGB, and under the new conditions some purely economic cases may have a political colouring. Under these conditions, the KGB investigation of the activities of the cooperative association Istok headed by Artyom Tarasov touched off a wave of panic among the Soviet business community.

An economic slump may be one more consequence of the government's war against crime.

* * *

The Supreme Soviets of Georgia, Armenia and Moldova have opposed joint patrolling. The Baltics are also far from enthusiastic about it. The Supreme Soviet of the Russian Republic agreed to a compromise when it confined itself to issuing an appeal to the Constitution Supervision Committee and the President asking them to cancel the decree as unconstitutional. Obviously, Russia's MPs did not want to add fuel to the flames after the Kremlin's acute reaction to the talk of the possible military sovereignty of Russia and Russia's own Defence Committee...

...Meanwhile Boris Pugo was promoted and is now a three-star general like his First Deputy Gromov, who served as the Soviet Army Commander in Afghanistan.

The last gift for Moscow

Boris Pinsker

The International Monetary Fund offers its own recipes for fixing the Soviet economy

Relatively few dare to try to explain what is going on in our economy. Even top officials in charge of economic affairs seem to be confused and tend to attribute all difficulties to the insidious activity of the mafia. One can only marvel at the valiant efforts of experts from leading financial bodies of the world who drew up a package recommendation for extricating our country from its present crisis.

While mentioning such indisputable achievements of perestroika as détente and glasnost, some writers usually forget about our unusual ability to arouse sympathy and cull gifts. The latest and perhaps most valuable gift from other countries was the elaboration of economic and social reforms for the Soviet Union. The West intends to guarantee the fulfilment of this programme by means of financial, intellectual and material assistance.

The programme was drawn up by experts from the International Monetary Fund, the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (World Bank), the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development with the assistance of the Commission of the European Communities. The information was supplied by the Soviet Foreign Ministry, the government's commission for foreign economic ties, the State Bank, the State Committee for Public Education, the state committees for statistics, labour, prices, material supply, the State Planning Committee, the Ministry of Finance, the government's commission for economic reform, the Ministry of Foreign Economic Ties, the Bank for Foreign Economic Affairs, and many other organizations and individuals. Experts met in Moscow, Brussels, Paris and Washington.

They worked at the request of the heads of seven major industrial countries of the West formulated at the Houston summit in July 1990. These Western bodies were asked to undertake a detailed study of the Soviet economy, make recommendations for its reform, and establish the criteria under which Western economic assistance could effectively support such reforms. This can be regarded as a gift – the latest not only temporally (the report of Western experts was published on January 3, 1991) but also the last in general if the Soviet government continues to implement only quasi-reforms, which merely dislocate the economy, instead of a serious and persistent reform of the country.

The experts presented a 100-page report containing a detailed study of all major aspects of the reform. It is gratifying that the same recommendations had already been given, sometimes in the same wording, by our scholars, such as Nikolai Shmelev, Vasily Selyunin and Larisa Piyasheva and others. Moreover, the principal ideas of this reform are now being put into practice by means of shock therapy in Poland and have begun to get that country out of its almost 50-year crisis.

The medical term "shock therapy" means, in the given context, that reforms must be carried out quickly and all their principal measures implemented simultaneously, if possible. In other words, the more rapidly the operation is performed, the less painful it is and the more chances there are for its favourable outcome. The main demand for the success of reforms is a substantial and broad liberalization of prices accompanied by growing competition on the domestic market.

This demand can be fulfilled if the government "brings clarity into relations of ownership and encourages the development of private ownership with the simultaneous commercialization of large enterprises." For this purpose it is necessary "as soon as possible to lay the juridical and legal conditions" needed for privatization and commercialization. In its turn, the commercialization of management of large enterprises is not the ultimate goal of the movement, but only the provision of initial conditions for privatization of these enterprises in a possibly shorter period of time.

"These efforts need to be buttressed by tighter financial policies and a more realistic exchange rate policy so as to contain inflationary pressures

Drawing by Leonid Tishkov

and prevent major external imbalances. To cushion the effects of the reforms in the poorest segments of the society, these measures should be supported by an income policy and by an effective social safety net (including an adequate system of unemployment compensation)."

"...Time will be needed to complete this process but the initial changes have to be sufficiently deep and wide that they are seen to mark an irrevocable break with the past and to establish a climate in which private economic activities are encouraged and protected."

In the opinion of experts the West **can** play a supporting role in the implementation of **such** a reform by providing "technical assistance, food aid and selected projects. More general balance of payments assistance would only be effective if a comprehensive programme of macroeconomic and structural reform were to be implemented."

Price reform. "Early and comprehensive price decontrol is essential to ending both the shortages and the macroeconomic imbalances that increasingly afflict the economy. Once resource allocation is based on market clearing prices, the ruble will become an effective medium of exchange. This should largely eliminate the economic disruption resulting from the growth of hoarding, barter, the black market, dollarization and imposition of restrictions on the free internal movement of goods."

"We see only a few areas where a case for state intervention in price setting might remain, but even in these instances prices should be raised substantially at the start of the reform process." These areas are few, indeed. "Public utilities (including public transport) are likely to remain public monopolies as in many other countries. Therefore, their prices are likely to continue to be regulated administratively. In the housing sector rents... will have to be raised to cover maintenance costs and to create an incentive for construction and the purchase of dwellings. Money wages will also have to be adjusted to reflect the monetization of in-kind payments for housing. The full set of supporting measures, including the legal and financial reforms needed for a properly functioning housing market, cannot be put in place immediately. Thus, rents (only for existing housing) will have to continue to be set administratively, with the intention of moving as swiftly as possible to a market system.

"Intervention through border taxes might temporarily be warranted for a small set of basic inputs, especially energy products, extensively used in industry and to provide protection to enterprises that could be endangered by sudden import competition..." The rationale of these measures is to give enterprises enough time to adjust to an open competition.

"Price increases should not be allowed to place an unacceptable burden on the more vulnerable segments of the population. The preferred approach to mitigate this effect would be a combination of increases in pensions and other transfers to individuals not active in the labour forces... An alternative would be to give each person ration coupons carrying the right to purchase a fixed quantity of certain essential goods at a specified price. Those wanting more of such goods would be able to purchase them at the unsubsidized market price. A variant of this approach would be to provide each person with a given amount of food stamps which could be used as money in buying eligible foods at regular market prices... We further recommend that in the early stage of reform the government use imports to stabilize retail prices of the most sensitive basic consumer goods – bread, milk and meat." As we can see, the sphere of activity of the future State Committee for Prices is to be sharply reduced. It will determine only transport fare and rent for existing housing. Customs tariffs will become a provisional means of influencing prices.

Ownership reform: privatization and commercialization

"While the ultimate goal of ownership reform is to privatize almost all enterprises in the USSR an intermediate step of commercialization – moving effective control away from the bureaucracy to a more commercially oriented management and control structure – will be necessary for most large firms... Rapid privatization would not only hasten the benefits of private ownership but can also yield revenue at a time when both the budget deficit and the monetary overhang need to be cut."

Since the people do not have enough money to buy even small and medium-size enterprises, "the prospective revenues from privatization should be forgone in the interests of speed and distributive equity... But such give-aways have a number of disadvantages. Most importantly a voucher system would result in widely scattered

PUBLIC OPINION

Find the mafia!

During a poll held in 21 towns by the National Centre for the Study of Public Opinion on Social and Economic Questions, 27 percent of respondents named the trade mafia as the main cause of the acute worsening in the economic situation in the Soviet Union. No other facts seem to the public more significant than the influence exerted by the mafia. Thus, a universal enemy image has been found to explain the economic paralysis. Every third woman, every fifth man and 39 percent of unskilled workers lay the entire blame for their present troubles on the mafia.

A considerable portion of respondents, 22 percent, see the principal reason of the economic crisis in the break-up of the planned system of economic management. Such an opinion was expressed by 38 percent of managers of factories and organizations who, incidentally, attach no importance to the mafia.

Nineteen percent of respondents have no trust in the party and government apparat. In the opinion of 23 percent of men and 15 percent of women within this group, attempts of the party and government apparat to restore the old order have plunged the country into chaos. Such a view is held mostly by people with degrees in higher education.

Thirteen percent of respondents regard the economic situation as poor mainly because the government is delaying the transition to a market economy. Three percent of respondents blame nationalists and separatists in republics and two percent, radical democrats for the present confusion reigning in the country.

Vadim Sazonov

ownership which would be unlikely to result in effective monitoring and control of enterprise managers. If use were to be made of the voucher system its disadvantages could be reduced by transferring the ownership of enterprise shares to holding companies that would exert effective ownership control."

The best way would be to adopt a flexible approach to privatization depending on the sphere of activity and the size of enterprises. "We support the rapid privatization of small enterprises through outright sales to individuals, cooperatives, and others. Assets should be sold through open and well publicized auctions and as quickly as possible. Payments in installments should be permitted to promote both rapid sales and a wide distribution of assets. It is of special importance to privatize transport, storage, and distribution services rapidly... Trucks, warehouses and retail shops are easily sold off in small units, and where existing service monopolies can therefore be broken quickly."

Of special interest to the broad public is the interpretation of the question of property of work collectives (Yugoslav socialism). "The experience of labour-managed enterprises in other countries, however, has been disappointing. Workers in control of their own enterprises have tended to concentrate on the relatively short-term maximization of their own incomes, thereby limiting the employment of new workers and running down the assets of the enterprises over time. Accordingly, substantially less than a controlling share might be made available on a preferential basis to an enterprise's own work force, and those shares should be distributed to workers on an individual rather than collective basis. Workers should enjoy the same ownership rights as other shareholders, including the right to sell their shares... in the market."

External trade reform.

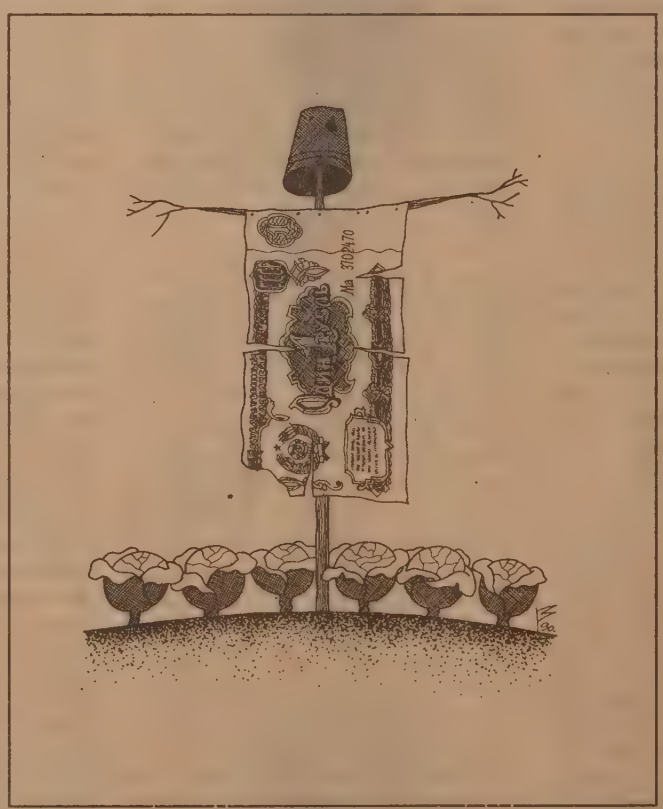
Licensing and quotas should be abolished to make the newly acquired rights of enterprises to conduct foreign trade operations an effective means of coordinating their economic activity. At the same time, foreign trade should be demonopolized so that the gains from trade are not captured by trading companies at the expense of the ultimate producers or consumers. An important step would be to abolish branch ministries so that the trading associations they sponsor would diversify the range of goods that each handles and the foreign trade organizations would become independent trading companies. Competition would also be strengthened by the ending of the present widespread prohibitions on "middleman" operations in international trade, the rationale for which disappears with domestic price liberalization.

Social security system, labour market, education and training.

The structural reforms will create unemployment during the transition period before the economy turns around. "It is essential to have in place a workable system of unemployment benefits **before** hard budget constraints are imposed on state enterprises. Expected higher levels of unemployment and present weaknesses of funding arrangements make some financing from general budgetary revenues a necessity in the near term. Over a longer time period, arrangements should be made to finance the normal unemployment compensation programme through contributions from both employers and employees."

According to official estimates, unemployment could rise to six million this year, and the number of refugees, first of all Russians from Central Asia, could grow by 600,000. An effective start to the reform could increase the jobless rate substantially. In these circumstances labour exchanges will have to be opened as early as possible to help unemployed people find work within a short period of time. An important trend in reducing unemployment is the boosting of small privately-owned enterprises. Vocational training and retraining should be geared to the needs of enterprises to a greater extent than presently is the case. "The most important needs for new training are likely to be in the areas of finance and management, where existing expertise is inadequate and the requirements in a decentralized market economy are great."

I hope that these excerpts from the study made by experts will enable readers to understand the character of recommendations and see how the Soviet government's measures correspond to them. Unfortunately, until now, the government has preferred to move in almost the completely opposite direction. Weak and half-way measures for liberalizing economic activity give way to equally weak measures for restoring the prestige and influence of planning bodies. The romantic projects of a smooth transition to a market economy within 15 to 20 years lead to a growing disagreement between the authorities of various republics and various hierarchic levels and, what is worse, to disagreement between the Union and republican governments and vice versa. The panic perception of reality (and the ensuing propensity to draw unbalanced and wrong conclusions) is an almost inevitable result of such an improvised and unscrupulous policy. Does it mean that perestroika is merely a thaw and that only the next generation of Soviet people will make use of the recommendations made by Western experts?



Drawing by Valentin Mokievsky

Soviet-style shock therapy?

City experts comment on the recent hocus-pocus with Soviet bank notes

Even among the Soviet citizens posted in the foggy Albion, the operation carried out with the fifty and hundred ruble notes found it's victims.

The news of the change found our hero in Moscow with a full wallet of notes which were withdrawn from circulation, but which were issued to him as holiday money just a few days before the event. Having handed the now useless "old" notes in at the bank, he nonetheless failed to receive any new ones as a result of their complete lack in this financial establishment. So who is this unfortunate, this fellow countryman left without funds in his own homeland? None other than the USSR's Ambassador to Great Britain, Leonid Zamyatin.

In the light of the peculiarity of the move, which this time was not explained as being done "at the numerous requests of the workers," I decided to get the opinions of local specialists on the matter.

Director of the Adam Smith Institute, an establishment which acts as advisor to the British Prime Minister, Dr Butler, gave this candid opinion on the reform: "The government has robbed its own population in broad daylight," he declared. "Although as an economic move, such a step has its advantages. One positive effect it will have on the economy will be certain reductions in the level of inflation. It is reminiscent of shock therapy treatment which immediately switches public attention to the problem. From a financial point of view it is a decent step to take; after this painful blow, the government's next moves will be less of a strain. And it is doubtless that they will be undertaken. These will be along the lines of bringing the country closer to a fully convertible ruble. At the moment your government is opting for the Brazilian style of economic reform but I don't know how justifiable that is.

"In Brazil society was polarized so much that certain owned millions and all the others were on the bread line. In your country, as far as I know, the situation is somewhat different. I would have gone for different measures to curb inflation. For a start I would change the government's credit policy, keeping credit to the bare minimum. Then I would radically curtail the administrative apparat and reduce the spending of the government itself. I would also escape from the clutches of those quasi-independent organizations financed by the state. The recent decision was a stride onto a tough course, largely disregarding the interests of the population. I think this may repel those businessmen who were preparing to invest capital in the USSR. If they are willing to rob their own people without batting an eyelid...

"However, if this was something selected to help overcome inflation then it can't be done in just one move. It doesn't do to entertain illusions that you will manage to move towards a market economy and overcome the crisis without reforms."

Another well-known British economist, Prof. Soros, who helped Hungary's government into a market economy, echoed the Director of the Institute: "As far as this event goes, it was not thought out and was badly prepared," he said. "Personally I remain a devotee of the ideas of your Shatalin. It is a great pity that this theories on the transition to the market were never put into practice. Now it seems that the main weight of the currency action undertaken has fallen on the shoulders of the man in the street."

Drawing by Victor Bogorad

The operation caught businessmen Ben Brahms in Moscow. "I think the idea is a good one," he said. "It allows to withdraw the vast mass of money from circulation and open the way to non-cash transactions. On the other hand, with the help of this reform it will be possible to accurately calculate the turnover of small businesses and thus use the taxation policy effectively.

"But," continues the entrepreneur, "the preparation for this measure does not bear up to any criticism. For its success in the USSR a large network of commercial banks would need to exist. Otherwise the process of mutual payments, even on the simplest shop-customer level, would take, under the existing system, weeks if not months...

"There are a lot of big industrial combines in the USSR employing tens of thousands of workers. Right now, before the advent of the modern infrastructure of banks and taxation services, I would move to establishing factory banks which have their accounts within the central finance body of the town or industrial district. These banks would be concerned with non-cash transactions with the combine's workers. For, nearly every large factory in the USSR has its own shop and its own canteens. The tandem 'factory bank-factory shop' is thereby already a mechanism simplifying non-cash transactions and speeding up the non-cash trading. The factory bank would in this way receive additional means for financing its own projects. The factory gets richer thus helping to curb its government credit. This would be another linch-pin in the lowering of inflation. The factory shop, of course, would deal with its own retail pricing, bringing in wholesale production at lower prices, and this would be a catalytic factor for the buying activity of factory workers.

"All in all," concluded Brahms, "I think things in the USSR will gradually improve. More money will appear at the government's disposal and more will come to other organizations. The latter is vital for those wishing to trade with your country. After all, dealing with a rich partner is a speedy matter."

Sergei Babusenko,
our own correspondent
LONDON

What is Saddam Hussein banking on?

Why is the Iraqi leader so self-confident? What is it that secures him support in the Muslim world? How will this war end?

Leonid Vasilyev, D.Sc. (History)

The long standing leader of Iraq – who claims pan-Arab influence as head of the Baath has never concealed his aims. They are typical of any totalitarian state and boil down to bringing about, by force, absolute ideological and political unity of the party and the nation, and to having every move taken by the deified leader as well as his entire policy as a whole, universally and enthusiastically approved by the public.

If the mise-en-scene of a drama production includes a gun hanging on a wall, this gun is bound to go off sooner or later. Such is the law of the genre. This allegory can also be applied to a totalitarian regime. Armed to the teeth and spoiling for a fight, a totalitarian regime is bound to start a war. And it has started it. First against Iran, a senseless battle which lasted for almost all of the past decade. Later, in 1990, Kuwait's turn came.

Enemy No. 1

As a matter of fact, the "hereditary emirate" could not offer serious resistance to Iraq and its 500,000-strong army. What's more, Kuwait was, for the Hussein regime, not so much an enemy as a touchstone, and the aggression against it was conceived as the first move in a new gamble on a global scale with tragic consequences. What Iraq is trying to do is to solve all the Middle Eastern problems, most of them linked to the existence and policy of Israel, by force. Hatred for Israel and for the Jews in general (although Arabs and Jews are blood brothers, the descendants of Abraham, the great forefather of the Semites) is due not only to the Jews having occupied a part of Palestine and formed a state where Arab countries had existed before. Neither does it come from the fact that Israel has emerged victorious from a series of Arab-Israeli wars. A more substantial reason for the Arab world's confrontation with Israel is that the latter is, in a sense, a symbol of Western civilization alien to that of the Arab, an embodiment of European capitalism and colonialism, i.e., the very enemy which must be de-

stroyed for the sake of the true believers' future prosperity.

What's more, this enemy may have a positive role to play in the fate of the Arabs: having them present a united front to Israel is not only a welcome prospect, but also a realistic proposition.

Israel has always been backed by the West, the US especially. It is largely at US expense (at the expense of rich American Jews, to some extent) that Israel has succeeded not only in building up an efficient economy and, consequently, in ensuring a rather high standard of living not only for Jews but also for the numerous Palestinian Arabs residing on its territory, but also in creating a first-class military-defence base.

In a word, Israel, which Arabs hate so much, is regarded in the Arab world as an alien body, belonging to a different civilization, as an aggressive interloper which all Arabs should, with Allah's blessing, destroy by joint effort.

The Hussein totalitarian regime has always regarded Israel as enemy No.1. The capture of Kuwait by Iraq, for all the enormous importance of this act for the latter country craving extra petrodollars, was not merely an offensive. It was a giant provocation of the kind largely connected with Arab-Israeli confrontation. If the West puts up with the annexation of Kuwait, well, praise be to Allah; if it doesn't, then let it pay for that by a pro-Arab settlement in Palestine. Iraq is not afraid of war. It makes no difference to Iraq whom it fights and when, and a war against the West (even if any Arab countries join it and take up the cudgels for Kuwait) will, in any case, end up as the Arabs' war against Israel. And then there will be no avoiding a definite answer to the question: Whose side are the Arabs?

Hussein warned the West in advance that a war with Iraq would mean an Arab war against Israel, and that Israel would be the first target.

It was such reasoning that prompted countries like Yemen, Libya and Jordan – not to mention bellicose Palestinians led by Arafat – as to whom to side with in the Gulf war. In accordance with Hussein's scenario, Israel's likely entry into the war (deliberately provoked by the shelling of Israeli cities) is to transform the civilized world's conflict with Iraq into an Arab conflict with Israel (the West).

Neutral stand to support Iraq?

One can understand those who take up the streets in protest against the Gulf war: people are tired of wars and want no more of them. They do not give much thought to the causes and the nature of the armed conflict. One can also understand the fanatical Muslims who call upon all the true believers to rally around the green banner of the holy Jihad.

Finally, it is easy to see why the leaders of most countries have backed the combat action against Iraq. They cannot appease the aggressor forever, and have been compelled to go to war. What's more, they will be compelled to carry the war through – not only to free Kuwait, but also to deprive Iraq of mass destruction weapons lest the Baghdad dictator should remain a threat to world peace. In their interpretation of the purposes of the Gulf war, the leaders of many countries have the sympathy and support of their parliaments. The situation in our country is somewhat different.

During the early stages of the conflict, observers noted the unprecedented fact that the Soviet Union, instead of opposing the West in the Middle East, showed awareness of the threat to world peace posed by the aggressor, and voiced its readiness to help bridle him, although Baghdad had been our ally until quite recently, and largely owes its military potential to our arms deliveries. Presently it turned out, however, that many influential forces in our country (the mighty military-industrial complex, above all) are displeased with such a policy.

One of the reasons for Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze tending his resignation was that his Middle East policy had come under heavy and harassing fire. The Foreign Minister was accused, for the umpteenth time, of "surrendering to the West" and leaving our erstwhile friend, Saddam Hussein, in the lurch. Those attacks could be dismissed as echoes of the past and ignored. Against the background of our policy's overall trend to the Right, the accusations in question took on a new quality and did not only hurt Shevardnadze, who discerned in them, with good reason, the indications of imminent dictatorship, but had an effect on Moscow's stand.

The policy of manoeuvring ensued. Now Moscow qualifies its support for the West in the Gulf war by ever increasing reservations which amount not so much to pressing for a peaceful settlement of the conflict (which, as any sober-minded politician can see, is out of the question under the circumstances) as to sending a signal to the Arab world and to our own Right that our country does not, and will not, have anything to do with the war. As soon as hostilities broke out Moscow issued a call for ceasefire, a call that had a humanitarian ring to it. The same can be said of the Soviet President's explanation regarding his moves on that fateful night, when he learned from Presedent Bush that the war was just minutes away. Yet under the circumstances, the demands to end the war immediately may mean the continuing occupation of Kuwait.

True, two weeks after the outbreak of the war Bessmertnykh and Baker pointed out at their special meeting, on behalf of their respective governments, that the war could be stopped as soon as Hussein started withdrawing his troops from occupied Kuwait. In other words, the demand for an immediate (unconditional?) end to hostilities was dropped. Nevertheless the impression is that sympathetic neutrality towards the aggressor is getting ever more pronounced in Soviet foreign policy. It is worth paying attention to the key in which the developments in the Gulf are presented by our government media – I mean Central Television, above all. On our TV screens we see scenes of protest demonstrations galore, but very few serious analyses, if any. The viewers may easily get the impression that the Americans have got themselves involved in another Vietnam against their own and other nations' will.

Fortunately, the attempts to inculcate this stereotype in the minds of the public have been thwarted by Iraq itself which defied the whole of mankind. The release of millions of barrels of oil into the Persian Gulf, which resulted in an enormous slick

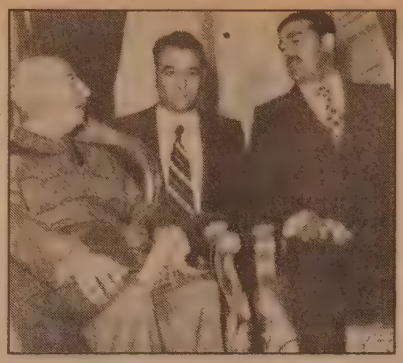
killing all local sea life and threatening to put the seawater distilling plants out of action, goes to show that Iraq is deliberately provoking the world under the motto "If I suffer, others will suffer still more". His repeated threats to use mass destruction weapons in the war follow the same logic, although Hussein cannot possibly fail to realize that if non-conventional weapons are brought into play against a small country like Iraq, no one at all will survive there.

The more people killed, the better

What is Hussein banking on? Why is he so confident of the massive support of an overwhelming majority of his people who enthusiastically respond to his calls? There are two basic factors behind Iraq's – or rather its leader's – behaviour. The first is Islam, at its most fundamentalist. Islamic fundamentalism manifested itself a decade ago when the leaders of the victorious revolution in Iran, Shiite Ayatollas headed by Homeini, proved ready, not so much to die for the cause of Islam, as to defy the whole of the non-Islamic world, and even the non-fundamentalist Islamic world.

Islamic fundamentalism is by no means simple and harmless. It is a militantly aggressive movement similar to Jihad. This is a reaction to the East lagging behind the capitalist West, an attempt to interfere with those who would like to fill the gap between West and East. Fundamentalism believes its greatest mission to be to defy the Western challenge and use Islam's religious and cultural tenets to unite all Muslims. Today a warlike Sunnite Iraq has taken over from Shiite Iran as the stronghold of Islamic fundamentalism; this has been an important factor in enhancing Iraq's prestige both among Arab countries and among Muslims the world over.

Those who have challenged the infidels and are prepared to die in a holy war against them stand high in Allah's favour. This fundamentalist Islamic idea is rapidly gaining ground in Iraq and in the rest of the Muslim world. Tens of thousands of young men in various Islamic countries, including some Soviet Republics, are prepared to volunteer to the Iraqi army any time. It is a firm commitment to Islamic fundamentalism that accounts for Hussein's charismatic appeal to Iraqis, Arabs at large and to many people in the rest of the Muslim world, including Iran, which has been at war with Iraq quite recently but which is now most sympathetic to the challenge Iraq has flung to the world – especially to the West, so hateful to Iran's ayatollas. This probably explains the mysterious evacuation of Iraq's 100 best combat planes to Iran in an attempt to save the flower of the Iraqi air force from destruction. Another reason why Iraq is putting on a bold front in the Gulf war lies in its preparedness to turn the war into a holocaust beyond the West's powers of endurance. This is another manifestation of the difference in the belligerents' religious and psychological points of departure. For a Muslim, self-sacrifice in the cause of Jihad is his duty to Allah (incidentally, the holy war dead are guaranteed a ticket to paradise); hence the readiness to sacrifice millions of lives. No one has dared to reproach Hussein for the 500,000 lives claimed in the Iran–Ireaq war. So who would dare to reproach him for the millions who will die in the war against the infidels? Therefore, Hussein is free to sacrifice hundreds of thousands of Iraqi soldiers. If he runs out of manpower of his own, volunteers from other countries will step in. Can President Bush afford anything of the kind? Of course he can't. Even if the proportion of American casualties to Iraq's is one to ten, American public opinion will hardly put up with the White House carrying the war on for too long.



When the world's most mighty meet... Saddam Hussein with Generalissimo Franco, General Secretary Brezhnev and the leader of the Cuban Revolution, Castro

Hussein is obviously prepared to pursue this murderous strategy, welcoming the prospect of the death toll running into tens and hundreds of thousands playing right into his hands. He is eager to start a ground war as indicated by the provocative raids on the territory of Saudi Arabia.

War prospects

I am sure that the US President's advisors and top military experts have seen through that strategy and are planning moves to counter it. Now it is vital that they play their cards right. I think that the best line of action to take, if it comes to a ground war, is to encircle Kuwait by a combined effort of amphibious, air- and seaborne assault units and Saudi-based tank units. Just how fast these forces will succeed in suppressing the 500,000-strong Iraqi army in Kuwait, time will tell. In any case, the allies will have to pay a high price for that because there is no indication that the trapped Iraqi forces will be promptly demoralized into surrendering. More likely than not, they will offer desperate resistance causing the attackers considerable loss of life.

The Gulf war is not a local war anyway. There can be no comparison with Vietnam which cost America so dearly. The outbreak of the Gulf war marked the flashpoint of the antagonisms which have been mounting in the Middle East for so long, and which have been intensified by the charismatic leader's militant ambitions.

The war is a striking manifestation of the Arab Muslim world's discontent about the situation which has taken shape in the second half of this century and which is closely linked to the successes scored by some countries and setbacks suffered by others.

A similar situation arose about half a century ago when a warlike Japan was likewise discontented and sought to settle accounts with the West, the US above all. That ambitious power built up impressive ground and naval forces and conquered a substantial part of Asia in a bid to make up for its having lagged behind the industrialized West by force. After World War II, America did much to neutralize Japan as a potential menace. Postwar Japan's economic and social progress and democratization solved the problem once and for all.

Although the Japanese miracle has been brought about not only by that country's defeat in World War II and by American intervention but also by the religious and cultural traditions of the Far Eastern region (which were also a factor in the impetuous progress subsequently made by Taiwan, Singapore, South Korea and Hong Kong), the fact as such should be taken into consideration. A number of Middle Eastern countries depended for their advance not so much on their religious and cultural traditions, as on petrodollar which enabled them to make an impressive breakthrough (Kuwait is a case in point). Therefore the liberation of Kuwait is regarded as a sacred duty of those countries committed to promoting the progress of the developing world. It is a duty of the civilized community to bring the Gulf war to a logical completion at whatever cost, lest the whole world should find itself in mortal danger.

I presume that the Gulf war is bound to end in a defeat for Iraq and in Hussein's withdrawal from the political scene. Fundamentalist passions, now running high, will subside, as Samurai passions did. The time will come for a concentrated effort towards a solution of the Middle East problem. Unlike many other observers, I am not inclined to reduce all these problems to just one – that of Palestine. Recall the Kurd problem, for intance. In the final analysis, however, confrontation and antagonism will give to development. If upon bringing the Gulf war to a victorious completion, the West, the US above all, succeed in working a miracle in the Middle East comparable to that accomplished in the Far East half a century ago, many problems now besetting the Middle East will take care of themselves or, at least, considerably ease up.

Fundamentalism, which has come to the forefront now, (just as nationalism has in our own country) is a reaction of the humiliated and the backward to the lag in their development. Catching up with the advanced world in the space of one or two generations can change the face of a country entirely, as demonstrated by Japan. The Middle Eastern countries' natural wealth – their fabulous oil resources, in particular – makes their similar transformation a realistic prospect, though perhaps needing more aid from outside.

Japan: trying on great power status

As a result of strong pressure on the part of the United States, Tokyo decided to allocate US$ 11 billion to the maintenance of the coalition forces arrayed in the Gulf, of which 2 billion has already been paid. Besides this, Japan has agreed to render a US$ 2 billion worth of material assistance to the countries of the region affected by the conflict, primarily Egypt, Jordan, and Turkey, in the form of a 30-year loan with an annual interest rate of 1 percent. However, the Japanese authorities will exercise strict control over the spending of the funds allocated by Tokyo to the anti-Saddam coalition, because the said money will not be distributed directly, but through the Peace Fund set up by the Gulf Cooperation Council.

Much greater attention was attracted, however, not so much by the generous Japanese contributions, but by statements from Japanese representatives that an auxiliary military contingent of the Japanese Self-Defence Forces might be dispatched to the Gulf to support the coalition. The Egyptian newspaper *Al Ahram* noted that the crisis in the Gulf had become a turning point in the history of Japan. This was confirmed by the statement of Japanese foreign ministry spokesman, Watanaba, who said: "We are living through the painful stage of becoming a world power."

The decision to deploy an auxiliary military contingent in a conflict area would not have raised any special questions had it been taken by any other country but Japan. Article 9 of the Japanese Constitution sets rigid restrictions on the role of Japan's Self-Defence Forces and prohibits any use of Japanese troops in settling international conflicts. However, it is believed in the Far East that Japan must drop its small-power attitudes and become a great power as soon as possible.

During Japanese Premier Kaifu's negotiations in Cairo, *Al Ahram* wrote: The Gulf crisis is Japan's passport to a leading role in the world. Japan seems to have no choice but to leave her snail's shell and to participate in protecting her interests away from home, thus contributing greatly to the protection of international security and stability.

Unlike US leaders, Premier Kaifu linked the Iraqi-Kuwaiti conflict with the settlement of the Israeli-Arab crisis. Said he: The problem of peace in the Middle East is not directly connected with the current crisis in the Persian Gulf. However, it is imperative that all efforts be taken for a comprehensive and just Middle East settlement.

At the same time Premier Kaifu defined Tokyo's attitude vis-à-vis the Palestinian problem. He said that peace in the region had to be based on the implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 242, stipulating Israel's withdrawal from the territories it occupied in 1967, the Palestinian people's right to self-determination, including the right to establish its own Palestinian state in the context of the recognition of Israel. The Egyptian press noted in this connection that Kaifu's journey to five Middle East countries might mean the beginning of a new era in the history of Japan, Japan's emergence in the world arena as a great economic and political power and a serious rival to the US in world politics.

This development of world tendencies is favoured by most Arabs who regard a multi-polar world as an acceptable alternative to the traditional Soviet-American confrontation. United Germany may be the next character to appear on the Middle East scene.

V. Yefimov,
Cand. Sc. (History)

While investigations continue, the fat cats remain unscathed

Dozens of firms helped arm Baghdad. Major trials are not expected

Deals with Middle East clients have always been profitable for German businessmen. Among the members of the European Community, Germany has been Iraq's main economic partner. In 1982, the turnover in German export to Iraq amounted to some DM8 billion. That figure does not include illegal deals, the true enormity of which is only now coming to light. All this was not hindered by the fact that Germany's legal code is one of the strictest in Europe in terms of limiting arms sales to regions outside of NATO, especially regions experiencing a crisis.

Official representative of the Bonn cabinet, Dieter Vogel, confirmed that since 1982, not a single licence has been granted by state control boards to any firm wishing to sell any kind of armaments to Iraq. Those who violated such bans are subject to legal actions. But the fantastic profit levels to be had by violating such laws proved to be too much of a temptation for German businessmen.

Project 1728

Three groups of German firms help arm Iraq. Major projects and several hundred million marks were divided up among the companies Ferrostahl, Gildemeister and Messerschmitt-Bölkow-Blohm (MBB). A second group of German firms specialized in the production of materials and equipment needed for the manufacture of chemical and biological munitions.

The third class of German contractors are middlemen firms or simply brokers who, for a handsome percentage, procure and transport to Iraq whatever it might need. Such services are paid for generously; the risk is worth the extra money. A small Munich-based export-import firm received for its services as a middleman providing the Iraqi army with communications equipment a commission of DM4.2 million (not including reimbursement for non-production costs incurred). Such brokers are capable of anything to make a mark. One of them, Bonn-based entrepreneur, Friedrich-Simon Heiner of the firm Inwako, played the deciding role in Iraq's Project 1728, which resulted in a radical modernization of the Soviet Scud-B tactical missile.

The basic Scud-B model has an effective range of 300 kilometres. The modernized version, dubbed the El Hussein, has a range twice that of its predecessor, and a newer model, the El Abbas, can hit targets up to 900 kilometres away. These are the rockets Iraq has been using to hit cities in Saudi Arabia and Israel. And, according to Israeli intelligence, Heiner aided Iraq in obtaining several detailed components of a gas-ultracentrifuge for use in enriching Uranium-235 and producing explosive material from it.

Some half a dozen other firms besides Inwako took part in Project 1728. The Hamburg-based firm Plath, which specialized in the production of navigational and electronic equipment, is suspected of fulfilling a multi-million mark order by Iraqi rocket engineers dating back to 1988 for, among other things, gyro-compasses essential for making corrections in in-flight rocket trajectories. Investigations are also being made into activities of the firm Thyssen-Wagner, suspected of having taken part in supplying Iraqi rockets with engine pumps. Also under suspicion are the companies Tramac Industrie and Leifeld and Co., and the businessman Werner Beaujean, well-known in the Soviet Union as a specialist on the handling of the clean-up after the Chernobyl disaster, and known in Iraq as a supplier of rocket fuel. In Al-Falludjah west of Baghdad, the site of Iraqi rocket centre, technical help was provided to Iraqi engineers by specialists and technicians from North Korea and the former GDR.

Of special interest were drawings and documentation relating to the production of Scud-B missiles, found during the investigation of the firm Havert Consult Project Engineering. In all likelihood, the company has been helping Saddam Hussein build rockets in Iraq for some ten years. Similar drawings were uncovered in what used to be the GDR. Specialists from the BND – West German intelligence – suspect that East German specialists built rockets for Iraq based on Soviet design drawings.

Whatever you want...

Among the multibillion deals made with Iraq, a special place is occupied by the FAE (Fuel Air Explosive) project. It involved the creation of a petrol bomb, the contents of which during use fill the air like the spray from an aerosol can before igniting. According to specialists, what results is an explosion similar in size and effect to that of a small nuclear device. In the opinion of Western intelligence services, Iraq was the first Third-World country to gain possession of this weapon, which was produced by the MBB concern of West Germany, a weapon they received in a roundabout manner via Egypt. At the offices of the MBB, as could have been expected, representatives claimed to have no knowledge about any dealings with Iraq, citing its 1988 refusal to handle the FAE project and the fact that it has not given any drawings of the bombs to Hussein. This is not prevarication on their part as all the dirty work was done by subsidiary firms established for this purpose outside West Germany in places where export laws are more liberal.

And this is not the only instance of the employment of such tactics. In 1988, for example, MBB sold Iraq 16 BK-117 helicopters. In order to get around export restrictions, they were first sent to Philadelphia addressed to the Helicopter Corporation, from there to England and then on to Iraq. Company employees explain this unusual shipping route as being necessitated by economic considerations, among them, the exchange rate of the dollar and further add that the helicopters involved

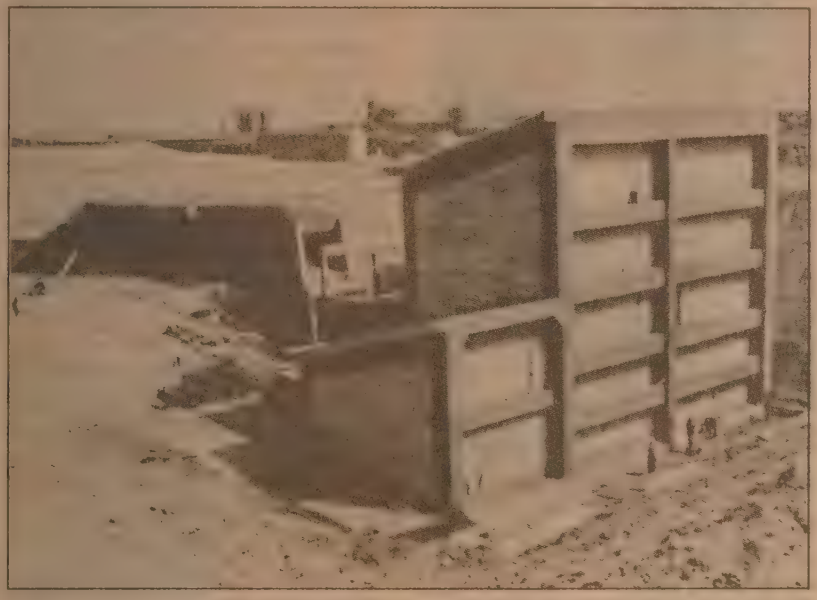
were of a non-military, rescue-type. This may very well be the case. Many civilian systems designed for civilian use manufactured by MBB are modified for military use outside the country. In the early 1980s, MBB sold the Spanish company Casa 24 new civilian helicopters. Casa then fitted them with Swiss Oerlikon cannons and shipped to Iraq. The management of MBB quite naturally remained in the clear, while in the meantime holding a considerable number of shares of Casa stock.

Finally, MBB concludes perfectly legal deals with Iraq through the joint French trading firm Euromissile, which has been around since 1972. Via this channel, Iraq obtained 166 Hot anti-tank missiles and 4564 Milan missile launchers. In addition, they managed to acquire 1050 Roland anti-aircraft missiles with launchers of joint German-French manufacture. It was these missiles that were used by Iraq to shoot down Iranian aircraft during the Iran-Iraq War, aircraft identical to those now being flown by US forces now prosecuting the war against Iraq.

Not a single item on Hussein's wish-list remained unfulfilled. According to the German magazine *Der Spiegel*, Iraq possesses drawings of the latest space rocket of the European consortium Ariane, the first launch of which is not scheduled until 1995. The engine was designed by the Thyssen-Wagner corporation based in Dortmund.

Even in the 1970s, the possibilities of Iraq's obtaining chemical weapons, dubbed "a poor man's atom bomb," were well-known. The first contractors at the time supplying Iraq with the necessary materials were American, Italian and French firms. At that time Baghdad was concentrating all its efforts on the construction of an atom bomb, that is until the 1981 Israeli strike on the Iraqi nuclear reactor. It was then that Saddam Hussein began concentrating on producing chemical weapons. Former contractors, however, began to suspect that something was amiss and ceased providing Hussein with the necessary raw materials and equipment. It was then that German companies stepped in.

According to the latest intelligence data, tens of thousands of artillery rounds and short-range rockets have already been equipped with deadly chemical gasses manufactured at the Iraqi chemical munitions plant in Samarra. This plant was equipped by the Hessen-based firm Karl Kolb, and for at least three years tabun, mustard gas and hydrocyanic acid were produced using German-supplied equipment, at a rate of 700 kilogrammes per work shift.



A rocket plant near Baghdad: equipped by the world's best firms

Photo from Der Spiegel (FRG)

Politicians fail to object

Today German politicians make claims of being helpless to act and call upon others to declare all those who might supply the Iraqi dictator with arms dangerous criminals. However, it is government bureaucrats and state agencies which encouraged the sale of arms to Iraq during the Iraq-Iran War. At the time, Hussein appeared to be the lesser of the two evils.

Count Otto Lambsdorff, leader of the Free Democrats, as late as 1989 supported the export of rocket technology as he said such technology could be used for peaceful purposes. Social-Democrat Hans-Jürgen Wischnewski put in a good word for the Boswau and Knauer firm, of which he was once a member of the supervisory committee, and it subsequently received an order from Hussein for construction of the superbunker built beneath his palace, an order amounting to DM100 million.

Some 20 percent of the MBB concern is located on Bavarian soil where the Christian Social Union has a hands-down majority. The supervisory committee of the MBB has always found a place for one of the Union's leading figures. At one time such a post was occupied by Max Streibl, the current prime minister of Bavaria. Nowadays, Bavarian interests are upheld by the Bavarian finance minister, Gerold Tandler. Or perhaps it is the case when he is actually upholding the interests of the concern?

American and Israeli intelligence services some years ago made known to Bonn their suspicions regarding the activities of certain German firms, especially those involved in the production of chemical munitions. The Federal Chancellory politely thanked them for the information they provided and thereupon proceeded to do nothing.

All told, some 110 German firms came under suspicion of illegal dealings. In 25 cases, the conclusion was reached that such suspicions were unfounded. It has been shown in practice, however, that one should not expect to see major trials. The fat-cats of the weapons trade are too experienced and powerful to be sent behind bars.

However, even they are not likely to get off without substantial fines. A Bonn-based consumers' association has already started circulating a list of firms whose products they say should be boycotted, including Mercedes cars, Siemens and AEG kitchen appliances, Philips light bulbs, etc.

An even greater losses will be suffered on the international market by those firms which engaged in arms deals with Iraq. Last fall American Senator Jessie Helms gave President Bush a list of 132 firms which had been supplying the Iraqi dictator with arms. No fewer than 68 of them were German.

The amount of German arms sold to Iraq is enormous. However, that is nearly a small part of the total amount Hussein has in his possession. On the top of the list of countries which provided him with weapons is the Soviet Union. In the past decade, it has sold $13.396 million (in 1985-dollars) worth of armaments of Iraq. Next in the list come France, China, Brazil, Egypt and Czechoslovakia. Germany comes 20th on the list...

Nikita Zholkver,
our own correspondent

BONN

Yasser Arafat:

The war will recarve the political map of the Middle East

The Palestinian leader makes an appointment for a meeting at the most unexpected time. But in the past few weeks, the PLO has toughened security measures and neither the time nor the place of the forthcoming meeting is known until the very last minute. I received a phone call in the dead of night. At this time Tunis seems to be a frontline city, with the sombre outlines of armoured carriers lurking near foreign missions. Two Tunisian policemen and several plainclothesmen hung around a villa having darkened windows. Seated in Arafat's office were his bodyguards and closest advisers. This was the situation in which the interview with Yassir Arafat was conducted.

New Times. The Palestinian leadership always said that there would be no war in the Persian Gulf. Did you really miscalculate, relying on the common sense of the opposing forces?

Yasser Arafat. I sincerely hoped that confrontation would be avoided. Despite this, I certainly took into account that the parliaments of the US, Britain and other European states voted one after another for war. Therefore, my words "there will be nó war" should be regarded as an appeal rather than a conviction.

I believe that the war launched by the United States was planned well in advance, hence it is aggressive from the beginning. It is being waged not for Kuwait, not for the restoration of the Al-Sabah dynasty, but for oil, for ensuring American interests in the Gulf.

N.T. Don't you think that Saddam Hussein is playing the "Palestinian card" in his own interests?

Y.A. For 43 years, Palestinians have been languishing under the US-Israeli yoke, since the UN resolutions adopted on this issue remained on paper. It must be noted that the link-up between the Palestine problem and the crisis in the Gulf was made by the Iraqi President at the request of Palestinians residing on the lands occupied by Israel. Saddam Hussein responded to the appeal of the oppressed Palestinian people.

N.T. In the last days before the war you said time and again that Palestinians were ready to take up arms and side with Iraq. Does this mean that the PLO is in a state of war?

Y.A. We have no other choice except to resist aggression which the whole Arab world and, above all, fraternal Iraq, is being subjected today. Our peoples have become victims of this aggression and the children of Palestine are being killed, just as Iraqi children. We shall do our utmost to put an end to foreign dominance on our land.

N.T. How do you assess the appeals of Baghdad to Arabs and Muslims everywhere to strike out at American and West European interests? Is this not an encouragement to engage in terrorist acts?

Y.A. It is a great pity that you, a Soviet journalist, are asking me this question. Speaking about terror, the Palestinian people are its victim in the first place. It is conducted in a planned way against us by the government of Israel which enjoys the backing of the US Administration, causing almost every day more and more suffering for our people in the occupied territories. Suffice it to recall the mass shootings in Jerusalem, Nablus, Gaza, Rafha, Beit-Sahour, the continuing attacks on Muslim and Christian sanctuaries in Palestine.

N.T. What do you think of the prospects and likely dates for ending the conflict? How do you assess the joint Soviet-American statement regarding the ways of ending the conflict and settling the Palestinian problem?

Y.A. This largely depends on the stand which the Soviet Union, China, European states and non-aligned countries will take. But the war was unleashed by President Bush with his allies and only he can say for sure how long it will last. One thing is clear: the war has become a veritable holocaust in which there can be no victors.

As for the joint Soviet-American statement, I regard it as a step in the right direction. It's merely a pity that it was disawoved by the official spokesman of the White House a few hours after it was given. I have only a few remarks on that score. First, it talks about Palestinians, but the point at issue must be the Palestinian people; and second, there is not any mention in the text about a Middle East peace conference, the need for which we have always seen just as has the Soviet Union.

N.T. What are your forecasts?

Y.A. Just as in any war, the war in the Gulf will recarve the political map of the region. Irrespective of its results, a basically new situation will arise. It is already obvious that what is happening in the region will affect not only the peoples of the Middle East and the Arab nation, but will have far-reaching consequences for the Soviet Union and for the world in general. In this connection I would like to know since when has the Soviet Union stopped considering the Middle East its southern flank, keeping itself at a distance from the events taking place there? Does the planned destruction of Iraq now under way serve the national interests of the USSR?

Interviewed by
Ivan Menshikov,
Novosti Information Agency correspondent
TUNIS

Torture in Kuwait

Amnesty International directs accusations at the Baghdad regime

The whole world was shocked when Iraqi television aired pictures of captured US pilots whose faces bore the signs of beatings. On the day after, once tactful newspapers carried banner headlines like "Kill the bastard!", meaning Hussein, of course. Saddam's plans to use POWs as a living shield to protect military installations, and his forcing of POWs to condemn the actions of the US government have touched off a wave of protests among the international human rights community. A special UN speaker mandated to look into such matters addressed all UN member states, pointing to Baghdad's glaring violation of the 1949 Geneva Covenants and the 1977 Optional Protocols to these Covenants.

The human rights organization Amnesty International regularly publishes reviews of human rights violations committed by the Iraqi regime in Iraq and by Iraqi troops in the occupied Kuwait. According to these reviews, based on testimonies of Iraqi and Kuwaiti refugees, the occupiers torture and shoot not only POWs, but also Kuwaiti civilians. Sometimes this is even done in the presence of the victims' relations. The corpses of those killed are displayed in the streets so as to frighten the living. Repressions are directed both at POWs and civilians. Possession of literature opposing Iraq, of a Kuwaiti flag or a portrait of the Emir is treated as a serious crime. Kuwaiti refugees say some people were arrested and shot because they had not replaced pictures of the Emir with those of Saddam Hussein in time.

Capital punishment is also meted out to those who shelter foreigners who continue to be used as hostages or a living shield protecting strategic installations and facilities.

Doctors are compelled to falsify the results of post-mortem examinations.

From the testimony of a former policeman

...I was blindfolded and handcuffed. Almost immediately they began hitting me, and I was subjected to beatings on the soles of my feet (falaga). They burned my skin with a hot metal rod. The interrogator kept asking me about the leaflet found in my car (the leaflet contained information about chemical weapons – **Editor's note**) and I denied knowing anything about it.

The following day I was beaten once again. This time they used a cane, an electric cable and another wooden implement with which they hit me on my rib cage until one of my ribs was fractured. The soldiers also kicked me on the pelvis with their army boots. They threatened me with execution, and with the rape of my sister. Then one of the officers said, "Bring the bottle." They spread my legs and began inserting the top of the bottle into my anus.

I was left in the cell for three days, and then they took me to al-Jahra police station. I was beaten there once again, and this lasted for about one hour and a half. An officer there threatened me with the electric chair (al-Kursi al-Rajjaj). After the torture came to an end, they forced me to declare allegiance to Saddam.

From the testimony of a 38-year-old Kuwaiti

...After a while three men entered the room. One of them carried a bucket of very hot water. First they beat me up by using Karate blows until I lost consciousness. Then all three men lifted me up in the air and dropped me on the ground. My head hit the ground and my jaw broke as a result. By that time I was bleeding profusely and vomiting blood. At this point they immersed my head in the hot water about six or seven times, all the while ordering me to confess. I repeated that I would not confess. Then they left me unconscious. After several hours another group of men entered the room. One of them attacked me with a sharp implement, cutting my face and arms. Then they beat me with hosepipes and electric cables.

Then they put me in a cell on my own. The room measured about 2x3 metres and had a small window. The following day they tortured me with electricity. First they poured water on my body and then applied the electricity. Then they placed electrodes on my toes and genitals. I was taken for interrogation once again. Finally one of them said that there was no use in interrogating me further and that I was to be prepared for execution...

Teimuraz Ramishvili

From Saddam Hussein's interview with the British TV

Interviewer: How can you justify the atrocities committed by Iraqi troops in your name?

President Hussein: Have you seen these atrocities yourself?

Interviewer: I have not seen them, but let me quote you some reports, Mr. President. One report speaks of scores of people being tortured and hanged at Kuwait University for opposing the annexation of their country. Another report speaks of 15-year-old boys being shot. An American woman married to a Kuwaiti talks about a pregnant woman being disembowelled. These reports have been coming out of Kuwait for some time. Do you know about these reports? Do they worry you?

President Hussein: What is certain is that I have not heard of any such acts. It is possible that, in the same way that the Western media is trying to fill the minds of people everywhere, every day, with lies about the situation... It is also possible that some false reports may come out of Kuwait, claiming the sorts of things you have described.

Experts found marks of torture on this Kuwaiti's body

The end of apartheid

President Frederik de Klerk told parliament that he is abolishing the laws that made South Africa an outcast of the world community

The 1913 and 1936 laws on land, on separate settlement of races and on the registration of the population according to race have ceased to exist in a matter of minutes although in reality it cost decades of struggle and thousands of human lives.

These few minutes became a real drama for some MPs whose nerves could not stand the test of the novelty and profundity of the reform.

The President's speech was interrupted with dissatisfied grumbling, and then an increasing number of MPs rose and left the hall.

President de Klerk told parliament he was abolishing the laws that made South Africa an outcast in the world community. He proclaimed a new manifesto on the basic principles of building a new South Africa:

"We declare our aspiration for the creation of a new free, democratic political system in South Africa where all people will be equally free from the moment they are born; all people shall have equal rights to participate in the political life without any restrictions; all people irrespective of their race, skin colour, sex and religion are henceforth equal before the law and shall be equally responsible to society."

Dozens of deputies slammed the door and it seemed that the President was about to address an empty hall. But those who remained in the parliament building were ready to build a new South Africa and applauded the President.

Among the supporters of Pretoria-troika, as the process of reforms is called here, are the Foreign Minister Roelof Botha and Minister of Constitutional Reforms and Planning Gerrit Viljoen.

An hour before the opening of the parliament they answered questions asked by correspondents.

The question to the Foreign Minister: "Was Frederik de Klerk's speech in parliament intended to prompt the USA and other countries to put an end to the international isolation and sanctions against South Africa?

"No," R. Botha declared. "In this case we are solving our own problems. Much more important for us today is formulating clearly and adopting a programme to eliminate the system of apartheid, persuade society that there is no alternative to reforms and that the process of reforms is irreversible."

The abolition of sanctions against South Africa, he believes, is a function of the current policy.

Roelof Botha noted that South Africa welcomes the fact that Bulgaria, Hungary, Czechoslovakia and other East European countries have already declared their decision to restore relations with South Africa.

As things stand today, the picture is perhaps a symbol, for laws die easier than prejudices

Of course, attention has been focussed on negotiations between the government and the African National Congress (ANC) and other democratic movements in the country.

R. Botha commented: as a result of bilateral consultations, both sides have come to the agreement that after February 1, 1991, the doors for talks are open.

In his speech Frederik de Klerk outlined two tasks vital for success: to create all conditions for discussing the new Constitution and to find a rational model of the future government based on non-racial principles.

De Klerk voiced his conviction that there will hardly be any South African to object against South Africa again becoming part of the world community and occupying a worthy place on the African continent.

Suggesting that the discriminatory laws of apartheid be annulled, Frederik de Klerk urges convening a national conference with the paticipation of all interested parties and groups to discuss the future political structure of South Africa, including the draft of the new Constitution.

The existing government, as well as the country's laws ensuring law and order, must function until the new Constitution of South Africa is discussed and adopted. Otherwise, the President noted, we may face chaos and instability.

The President said that the legalization of the activity of local self-government bodies, which will be subordinated to the central government, would be a major step into the future. Democratic elections of leaders at a local level will make it possible to develop a system of administration free from racial or any other forms of privileges.

R. Botha was asked how this task would be resolved in practice. The minister answered that his National Party was already open to any South African, which means that a black President may be elected in South Africa. For the time being, this phrase was met with a smile and irony.

On parliament's opening day passions ran high not only inside the building. An impressive demonstration of ANC supporters took place on the streets of Capetown. They demanded urgent convocation of a copnstitutional Assembly, disbandment of the government and formation of a new, transitional government representing the interests of all segments of the South African population. A part of the residents of the city and its outskirts joined the marchers.

I happened to observe the following scene: a huge crowd watching the work of the parliament gathered near the show-windows of the shop selling TV sets. Some of them backed the stand of de Klerk, others the viewpoint of the marchers. Still others were completely confused. Something they had been accustomed to for decades was collapsing before their very eyes.

Nikolai Reshetniak,
our own correspondent
PRETORIA–CAPETOWN

A war of nerves

which could have turned into a civil war

In the last week of January, Yugoslavia found itself on the brink of a civil war. Never before in the past decades was it so close to such a danger. The crisis was provoked by a decree of the Presidium (collective presidency) on "the disarming of para-military groups and the return of illegally acquired arms." The decree was to be carried out within ten days. In the event of non-compliance, the army was to take appropriate measures.

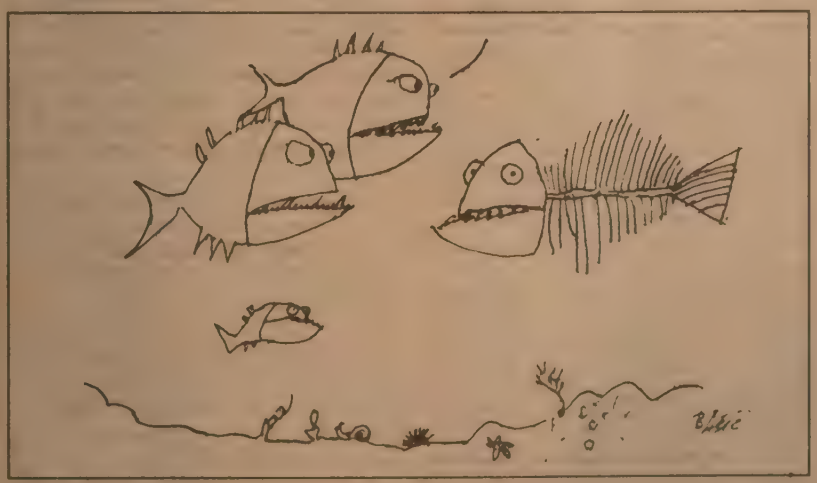
When the term expired, only several dozen guns had been handed into army depots. The leaders of nearly all republics declared that there were no para-military organizations, not to mention illegal arms on "the territory within their jurisdiction." For this reason, they said, the decree does not apply to them.

In their conjectures about the purpose of the decree, many people think that it was directed mainly against Slovenia and Croatia, whose non-communist leaders proclaimed the full independence of the republics and actively began to raise armed groups for the protection of their "new democracies." During their six-month rule in Croatia, the leaders of its Democratic Community increased the strength of police from 16,000 to 60,000.

Doubts about the purpose of the decree were dispelled by the Defence Ministry. If the Croatian leaders do not disband all para-military formations on their territory, the ministry pointed out in its appeal to the public, the army will enhance its combat readiness and propose taking legal action against people guilty of the illegal possession of arms and of terrorist activity.

The Croatian leaders realized the nature of the threat and Franc Tudzman, head of the republic, called on its population to rally and repulse imminent intervention. The Croatian press took the call as a signal to begin an anti-army and anti-Serbian campaign as it was alleged that the army would be defending Serbs living in that republic. The people became panicky and bought up all the goods in the shops. Even flour and salt, freely available for years, are difficult to obtain now. In the evening, the strength of police in the Croatian capital approached the number of its residents. Huge tanks with liquid natural gas had been placed near two army barracks situated within the city bounds.

The army also joined in the war of nerves. However, the increase in the activity of the military produced a somewhat unexpected effect. The Croats, who only recently voiced their dissatisfaction with the government's inability to solve their republic's economic problems, rallied round its leadership when they had sensed the threat.



This is what we do with intruders

Drawing from the book "Political Caricature" (Yugoslavia)

It seemed that the war of nerves would turn into a civil war. Yugoslav television showed a documentary made by the Defence Ministry. Most of the scenes, as is clear from subtitles, were shot "without the knowledge of those shown. The film shows that arms were illegally delivered to Croatia by its two ministers and that Croatia's Defence Minister Martin Spegelj, had ordered the raising of special units with a view of annihilating in case of danger the Yugoslav People's Army officers remaining in Croatia. After the film was shown, many people began to fear direct military intervention.

But this did not happen. At its urgently convened meeting the Presidium (collective presidency) of Yugoslavia reached a compromise that defused the tension. Croatia agreed to disband part of its paramilitary police units and the army stated that it was reducing its activity in the republic. This time Yugoslavia managed to avoid the worst. Everyone understands, however, that the compromise did not remove tension but merely lessened it for a time.

An important part in the compromise was again played by Yugoslav premier Ante Markovic, one of the few political leaders in the country who tries to stand above the inter-republican discords. Reflecting on the past events, he noted: "The peoples are not to blame. The responsibility must be borne by concrete persons who, in the struggle for power, are prepared to sacrifice everything except their own interests." In the sharp confrontation between the advocates of federation and confederation the Yugoslav premier tries to find at least a minimum accord that would prevent a break-up of the country.

The events in the last week of January also raised the question of the army's role and place under these new conditions. The military leaders have already taken steps towards depoliticizing the army. They declared their support for Ante Markovic's policy of preserving the unity of Yugoslavia, though with one reservatrion – as a "socialist federative state." It is an important reservation, because the government wants to preserve united Yugoslavia in any form – confederal, federal or socialist. The main thing is to preserve it as an integral state.

The Yugoslav crisis can be settled in various ways, except a military one. All political forces in the country are so far unanimous on this point.

Gennady Sysoyev,
our own correspondent
BELGRADE

Civil peace is needed

Bulgarian Prime Minister **Dimitr POPOV** discusses some of the problems facing his cabinet

The head of the Bulgarian government, a lawyer not affiliated to any party, is faced with serious problems. His predecessor, Petr Lukanov, who headed the government formed by the Bulgarian Socialist Party (former Communist Party), was forced to resign under the pressure of the parliamentalry opposition consisting of the Alliance of Democratic Forces and the non-parliamentary opposition represented by the Confederation of Independent Trade Unions, which called strikes of protest in which hundreds of thousands of workers participated.

However, the problems which the Lukanov government failed to solve – inflation, food shortages, a decline in standard of living and an aggravation of religious and ethnic conflicts – have remained. Can they be solved by a new, coalition government formed after lengthy talks and disputes? Below is an interview given by Dimitr Popov to Sofia-press reporter Ofelia Khristova.

Are you not afraid that the difficulties with which the cabinet was formed will show in the joint work of its members?

Difficulties exist, of course. However, we have reached an agreement in principle of the most important problemms, though practical steps towards solving them may stir up disagreement. The political forces may hold different views on how our programme will be carried out, in what volume and at what pace, and on what exactly emphasis should be laid. Thus the present difficulties may endanger the future existence of our government. But this is in principle only. I believe that such a danger does not really exist, because all the political forces represented in parliament have reached an understanding on the present situation: the coalition government is the last chance to guarantee the beginning of the transition to a market economy.

Does this mean that the confrontation between political forces has been overcome?

It means that at any rate, the passions which ran high have now subsided. We have reached a stage at which the political and economic programmes must be fulfilled, not questioned. A peaceful situation and the active participation of all our people are needed for this purpose. Bulgaria needs civil peace and a stable government.

How do you understand civil peace, now a subject of heated debate?

On the one hand, civil peace is an agreement of the government with the trade unions and all employers on an early solution of the nation's social problems. The government should be able to work quietly for at least 250 days so that it may be able to start fulfilling its programme. On the other hand, civil peace is the government's guarantee to supply the population with food and consumer goods. It is, at last, the inner quiet of people, their conviction that the present government is worthy of trust, that it will do everything within its powers to fulfil its programme, and that dramatic political clashes will not arise any longer. This is how I understand civil peace.

Does civil peace contradict the political activity of people, their readiness to defend their views?

No, civil peace makes political struggle civilized and guarantees its development. Political struggle is channelled into parliamentary discussions. In fact, civil peace means confidence in the government's actions and the administration of the country through parliament. It is an indispensable condition for a modern law-based state.

What can we expect in the near future? A sharp decline in standard of living?

This can be interpreted in different ways. If you pay a token fare for travel by bus, and buses run irregularly because of petrol shortage, or if electricity charges are rather low but you sit in darkness because there is no electricity – can you say that your standard of living is high? Will the standard of living drop if goods become more expensive, and, though consumption will fall, we shall guarantee that these goods will always be available in the shops? Higher living standards mean that people have less money but a greater possibility to buy something for it. For this purpose goods should be marketed at their real price.

It is true that we have a token bus fare. But it can also be said that we have token wages.

Of course, labour must back up the quality of these goods possessing their real value, once which will certainly be higher than the present one. However, it is very difficult to achieve this in the transition period. The state does not have the means to put this into practice. First of all, it is necessary to help the people who are not well protected in a social respect. Those who have relatively higher incomes will have to carry the main burden. We would simply not be able to go over to a market economy by simultaneously raising wages and prices.

It is known that exactly this fear of unpopular reforms made the government delay them. Do you also feel such a fear?

Is it worth talking about fear if such measures are unavoidable? We are beginning reforms with the hope and belief that we shall be properly understood. For this purpose it is necessary to determine clearly what awaits us and how to explain these measures to the people. Everyone should understand that the people will have a hard time and they will have to endure it, for otherwise they will have to abandon hope for a democratic society and a better life in the future.

Some claim that you sacrifice yourself by beginning political activity in the most unfavourable period.

I have often heard the word "sacrifice" in the last few months. What does it mean? It means that a person must shoulder a certain burden and find a definite path in order to achieve definite results in the end. I would not take up the job if I did not believe in my success. It is not simply the belief of a naive optimist. It is the belief of a well informed man.

The West begins in Poland

Has the Soviet leadership taken due note of the fact that Poland's was the most critical reaction to the recent events in the Baltics? Hardly, because Moscow seems to be too busy to pay much attention to its relations with Eastern Europe. The dramatic events in Georgia and the Baltics, troubled financial policies, a tattered economy and growing political instability are the major concerns of the Soviet leadership. The rest of the time is devoted to the Persian Gulf, relations with the United States, the European Community and Japan. This may be necessary, but this does not mean that now, in the calm following the East European storm, new problems and differences are not maturing. Very soon Moscow may have to face these problems and tackle them either with the help of another version of the "new political thinking," or by its traditional means.

Vladimir Razuvayev

It is easy to guess that Soviet–Polish relations will be the most critical of these. History has turned these relations into a real minefield, while the present adds new problems. Warsaw demands that Soviet troops be withdrawn first from Poland and then from Germany. The problem of the homebound Soviet troops' transit via Poland remains unresolved. The Polish public is scared by the prospect of millions of Soviet refugees flooding the country in an attempt to escape the dramatic economic crisis and possible political repression in the USSR.

The events in the Baltics were condemned by the Polish Sejm, Senate, Foreign Ministry and government. The Polish ambassador was recalled from Moscow "for consultations." The Polish government continues efforts to establish "special relations" with the Baltic republics, which may include the opening of "information bureaus" in the near future.

Some circles in Moscow regard these actions as political buffoonery, others as "new Polish nationalism," and still others may believe that "the Polish threat" could seriously destabilize the situation in the Baltics, Byelorussia and the Ukraine. These viewpoints may be correct to some extent, but it is also true that they are far from explaining the deeper factors that shape Soviet-Polish relations.

In his time the celebrated Russian philosopher, Vladimir Solovyov said that Russia's attitude to Poland is, basically, Russia's attitude to the West. The philosopher meant the purely religious side of the problem. Since Moscow stopped regarding itself as the official capital of the Orthodox East, Solovyov's words seem to have lost their topicality. However, the victory of East European revolutions may breathe new life into the famous philosopher's formula, this time in the political sphere.

Geographically, Poland will never become part of Western Europe and will always remain a neighbour of the USSR (with all the ensuing geopolitical consequences). This proximity will give Moscow broad opportunities to bring pressure to bear on Warsaw, using such means as regulation of energy-carriers' exports and manipulating its import policies (the quality of a great deal of Polish-made goods is so low that Poland can only hope to sell them in the USSR). Theoretically (let us hope, only theoretically) Moscow could pressurize Poland using the remaining Warsaw Pact structures.

Today Moscow is free to choose from three options concerning its relations with Poland. The first option is to ignore the troublesome neighbour for some time hoping that the problems will resolve themselves. The second option is to activate powerful levers of influence and to bring the neighbour back to its senses. The Polish government is likely to understand, eventually, who is who in world politics. It is easy to imagine, however, how the Polish public, which cherishes no kind feelings towards its Easten neighbour, will react to Moscow's resorting to pressure. If Moscow goes this way, the historical mines implanted in Soviet-Polish relations will go off, turning Poland into a hostile antagonist of the USSR.

Soviet diplomatic efforts in Warsaw must be cautious. Moscow must seek compromises as it does in Washington, Bonn and Paris

One should not forget that although Poland is geographically an East European nation, most Poles consider themselves Westerners, at least spiritually. One must not forget the strong ties with numerous Polish communities in Western Europe and North America, communities which are actively participating in the rebirth of Poland economically and using their vast political influence in their host countries. Let us also remember Poland's traditionally pro-Western attitudes and the West's interests (although often time-serving ones) in Poland.

That is why the best choice seems to be to opt for the third variant: Moscow must regard Poland as the doorstep to the West. Naturally, the Soviet Union should not expect humanitarian assistance or billions worth of loans from Poland, and our closest Western neighbour will remain a problem state in the foreseeable future. However, if Moscow is really interested in improved Soviet-Polish relations its diplomatic efforts in Warsaw must be cautious, Moscow must avoid using force and seek compromises as it does in Washington, Bonn and Paris.

...Perhaps Poland is not the only country where the West may begin for the USSR?

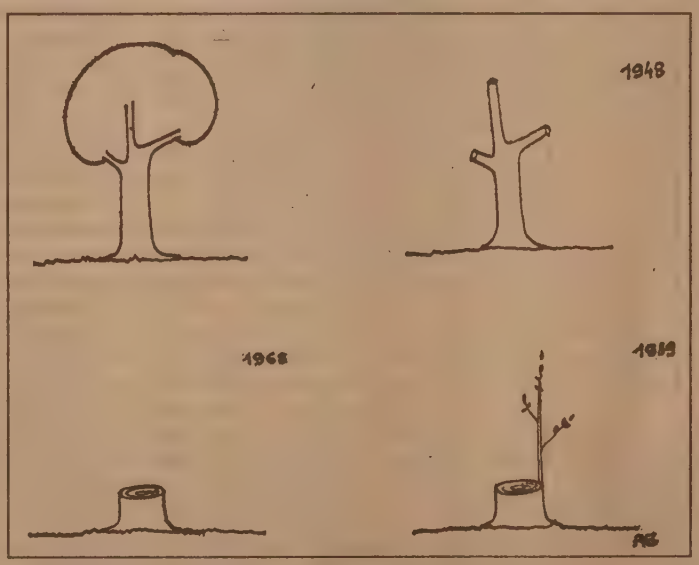
The Pentagonale, Troika... What else?

The sudden death of the socialist community and the decline in the political, ideological and military influence of the Soviet Union created political vacuum in Eastern Europe. Not yet merged with existing Western European structures, but moving away from the previous forms of cooperation with the Soviet Union, the countries of Eastern Europe, or at least a significant portion of them, see one of the ways of strengthening their positions in the formation of new smaller forms of regional cooperation and maintenance of security.

An example of a regional association which has grown out of the political vacuum in Eastern Europe is the Pentagonale uniting Austria, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia and Italy. Its founders at the end of 1989 from the first set themselves the task of, inter alia, demonstrating by example of those countries which formed the association, each having a different social structure, the possibility of cooperating effectively in spite of ideological and other differences. Now that differences of a purely ideological nature have all but disappeared and the Warsaw Treaty Organization is on its death bed, national interests become of primary importance, interests which serve as a real basis for cooperation.

It should be recalled that four of the Pentaganale nations are states which were created from the splinters of the old Austro-Hungarian Empire. As is generally accepted as true, from the economic standpoint, the old Austria-Hungary had a high degree of integration. Remnants of the old integration (for example, in the field of communication) are still in existence. Taking advantage of any opportunity to give a rebirth and see a development of former integrational ties suits the needs of the members of the association. Along with this there are other interests to be fulfilled. Italy intends to strengthen its influence in the region and expand its foreign economic activities outside the framework of the EEC and NATO. On the other hand, it seeks to slow somewhat the pace of German economic and political expansion. Opposing the influence of Germany is evidently one of the motives behind Austria's decision to join the Pentagonale. For Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Yugoslavia, the deciding factor was more the opportunity of gaining the support of Italy in order to facilitate entry into the EEC and other West European economic and political structures. For Hungary, the Pentagonale also represents an important forum from which to voice its concerns about national minorities.

Judging from information that has appeared in the press, Poland is taking active steps in an attempt to become a member of the association. However, the Pentagonale has so far not given such attempts its full support. Opponents of the inclusion of Poland in the alliance say that Poland belongs more to the Baltic region, while supporters of its entry into the union stress that it would allow the Pentagonale to expand its range of influence, and thus many consider that Poland's chances for inclusion are quite good.



Stages of development in Eastern Europe...

Photo from Express (CzSFR)

A meeting of the leaders of the Pentagonale states was held in Venice in August of 1990. There a document was adopted which spelled out the basic tasks which stand before them: a plan for economic cooperation among the participating countries for 1990–92. A creation of a web of roads running North-South and East-West as well as a rail modernization programme were also provided for. In addition, measures are planned for developing cooperation in the areas of environmental protection, energy development and other fields. Special committees have been created.

The objective interests of the Pentagonale countries do not, undoubtedly, completely coincide and there even exist disintegrational factors within the alliance. However, at the present time, there is a general tendency among them to draw closer to one another. Therefore there exist real hopes that the Pentagonale will continue to develop as a form of regional integration and cooperation, the members of which are not bound by strict organizational guidelines and obligations.

While the Pentagonale has been virtually ironed out as an organization, the regional grouping including Hungary, Poland and Czechoslovakia (the Troika) until recently still debated as to whether there indeed was a reason for it to exist. The original idea was that the Troika would unite the strengths of the three countries to withdraw from the Soviet sphere of influence and together resist efforts to reinstall the former regimes. Later, after it became clear that the Soviet Union had no intention of interfering in the internal affairs of the countries of Eastern Europe, the necessity of such a bloc diminished and interest in its foundation fell off for a time. Recently, however, the situation has changed.

On the one hand, the events in Lithuania and the Baltic crisis as a whole have reawakened fears of interference on the part of "big brother" and thus arose the desire of the countries to unite for purposes of security against

the "threat from the East" even though problematic. This lies at the core of the proposal to turn the Troika into a kind of bloc, in the framework of which the members might collectively guarantee their security. The chances for creating such an entity depend on further developments within the Soviet Union. A possible conservative coup would strengthen the position of the supporters of such a bloc. On the other hand, despite fears of a political and military character, it is becoming more clear to the leaders of states, still members of the Warsaw Pact and CMEA, that a way out of the economic crisis they have found themselves in cannot be found merely by strengthening ties with the West and that economic ties with the Soviet Union must be preserved, even if in weakened form, as well as some other forms of regional cooperation. A proposal has been put forth, for example, to establish a free trade zone on Polish, Hungarian and Czechoslovak soil.

It is felt that even with the sticky situation in the Baltics, the chances of turning the Troika into a military alliance at the present time are not great. However, as an organ which might coordinate efforts aimed at strengthening ties with the EEC, obtaining Western aid and achieving more beneficial conditions for trade, economic and political relations with the Soviet Union, the Troika seems at the present time to be a promising political entity.

The creation in Central and Eastern Europe of new associations to replace the old is a complex and contradictory process. On the one hand, there exist the holdovers of former bloc consciousness and the ideology of confrontation, while on the other, it forms one of the possible roads to general European integration. Regional cooperation, economic and political strengthening of ties among nations and their geographical locations can serve as a step towards a united Europe. What is essential is a strengthening of the positive element of regional integration which could be brought about by a firming up of ties between the Soviet Union and its various separate republics and their Eastern European neighbours.

Svyatoslav Bulakh

BUDAPEST

Polish scenario

The chronicle of events that follows, which paved the ground for the fatal day for Poland – December 13, 1981 – is compiled from the Polish press of that period. I leave it to readers to make their own judgements. Let all of us ask one question: won't the history which once turned tragedy become for us a farce?

Thus, the Polish People's Republic, 1981. Political and economic crisis is rapidly gaining momentum. Shop counters become empty, inflation rises sharply. The country is feverish from continuing acts of protest and strikes. The number of Solidarity supporters comes close to 10 million. The government's prestige disastrously declines.

April 4 – the government sends to the Sejm a draft *decree on censorship*.

April 22 – a new *Decree on Censorship* is approved.

May 25 – the Council of Ministers discusses measures to *maintain public order and state security*.

July 14–20 – the 9th *extraordinary* congress of the Polish United Workers' Party (PUWP) is convened.

July 22 – it is announced that the quota of meat and meat products per *ration card* is reduced.

July 25 – "hunger march": women in Lodz demand *improvement in food supplies*. Similar marches under the guidance of Solidarity are held in other cities.

July 27 – the Main Statistical Board reports on *drop in all indices* of the country's socio-economic development.

July 31 – the Sejm adopts a new *government programme* to overcome the crisis.

August 1 – the government reports on the rapidly growing *gap between the amount of money in circulations and commodoties* in the market.

August 15 – the procurator's office bans the distribution of the bulletin Solidarnosc. Printing machines and paper are confiscated. The reason: *"insulting the honour and dignity of the party leadership* and spreading anti-Soviet propaganda."

August 19 – Solidarity calls on *boycotting the press*. Only *Trybuna Ludu* – the paper of the Communist Party, and *Zolniers Wolnosci*, the paper of the army, are put out.

August 24 – a *new rise in prices* is announced.

September 5 – the First All-Polish Congress of Solidarity opens.

September 11 – the *anti-alcohol decree* is adopted.

September 29 – a new attempt of *hijacking an airliner*, this time abortive, is made.

October 15-17 – a new *wave of strikes and protests* is felt.

October 24 – a government resolution is issued on organization of and on powers granted to *operational military groups across the entire country*.

November 5 – a report is issued *on expanding the activity* of operational military groups to maintain law and order and combat economic crimes.

November 19-20 – mass protest against the lack of objective television reports is held and Solidarity calls for *a boycott of television*. The "war" of posters and slogans: "TV information – a sample of Goebbels propaganda!", "TV is lying!"

November 30 – Solidarity calls for *the removal of party organizations from enterprises*, depoliticization of the army and law-enforcement bodies: "No to party monopoly!"

December 2 – a strike is held at the higher fire-fighting school, occupation of its premises by students and its seizure *by a team of military commandos*.

December 6 – the presidium of Solidarity makes an appeal to hold a general strike on December 17 in protest against the military occupation of the Higher Fire-Fighting School. Solidarity demands settling by referendum of *the question of general elections* to the Seijm (Polish parliament) and the *handing over of power*.

December 7 – the presidium of Solidarity speaks out in favour of the creation of the so-called *workers' guard* – paramilitary detachments of self-defence and protection.

December 11-12 – a session of the All-Polish Coordination Commission (ACC) of Solidarity is held.

At 11.00 p.m., December 12, the ACC of Solidarity by majority vote adopts a resolution calling for an open confrontation with the ruling regime.

An hour later – beginning midnight, December 13, *martial law is declared* in Poland...

Rudolf Borecki,
our own correspondent
WARSAW

POLITICS AND MORALS

Whither this country?

Sometimes you've got to put kid gloves on before you act...

WHAT'S GOING ON? One can say that perestroika began with the film *Repentance* rather than with speeches. The film's famous last phrase about the street which does not lead to the Temple, and the no less famous *Novy Mir* article entitled "Which Street Leads to the Temple?" set a new trend in political journalism. This became a popular figure of speech, and many were long under the impression that what they saw happening around them was part of the nation's search for the road leading to the Temple, the epitome of all that is pure, honest and elevating.

Where is that street? Where is that Temple?

Two or three years of purification and hopes passed, full of shocking insights into the horrible truth, and it seemed at times that the Temple would present itself to us any moment...

Right before our very eyes, and to our utter dismay, the Temple, still out of our reach, is melting into thin air like a mirage...

WHAT'S GOING ON? There still exist pockets of resistance. Nevzorov's "on-the-spot report" from Vilnius was criticized by many publications, but it has proved to be only the first one in a series which is in its third week now and which has given rise to speculations about an organized campaign.

Campaign or no campaign, the series has left a nasty taste in the people's mouths, which persists. Something has insulted public opinion, almost apathetic as it now is.

It had dawned on us that we are surrounded with lies.

WHAT'S GOING ON? I think that other contributors to this issue of *New Times* will touch, in one way or another, upon the introduction of the new street patrolling procedure by mixed teams of soldiers and militiamen. I admit that I do not object to having more patrolmen in our streets so that each cry for help would bring cops and soldiers running or, better still, a police cruiser screeching to a halt and disgorging rescuers in uniform.

"Why do militiamen inspect suburban trains in pairs?" I asked a patrolman of twenty years' standing. My question surprised him a bit. "It's safer that way," he replied. He was right, of course. Indeed, what's wrong about adding a soldier to a militiaman and inspecting the suburban trains twice as often?

What this amounts to, however, is not a vigorous anti-crime action but a campaign of intimidation and showing who's the boss around here. As a result, we have found ourselves in an absurd situation where our safety is looked after by troops with rifles and submachine guns slung over their shoulders, armoured personnel carriers, whole battalions even... This arouses an outburst of indignation, with deputies voting against, the President getting into a rage, his instruction ignored, no one knowing what to expect, everyone fearing provocations and smelling rat, and everything going topsy-turvy!

We are being told that all this is meant to get rampant crime under control. The currently oft-repeated phrase, "Make our streets safer so that people aren't afraid to venture out at night," brings to mind another phrase, uttered last summer: "Our children use loaves as footballs," which pushed our country to the verge of famine. The statistics intended to scare us into believing that our streets are unsafe reveal that street crime went up by a mere four percent last year. Why sow panic then? Haven't we had worse times? Making out a case for mixed patrolling, a militia general informed us the number of heinous crimes had gone up 11.5 percent in 1990, and 44 percent last January.

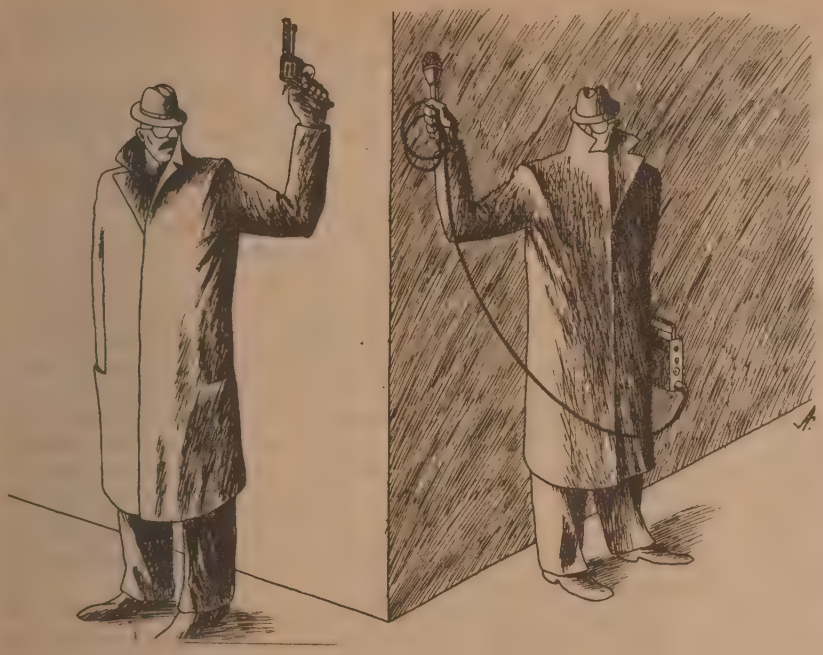
Now just wait a minute! What happened in January 1991? Why did crime quadruple then? Was that due to a peculiar arrangement of the stars? Or was it a case of mass psychosis? Have hardened criminals been pardoned and released from jails?

All this is very strange. I marvel at statisticians' efficiency: no sooner had the month ended than they came up with the figures. And what a foresight! They probably knew about the coming rise in crime in advance when they issued the decree on reinforcing militia patrol teams with the military a month before.

I am inclined to think, though, that the crime figures were made up to justify the decree by, and that the latter was not really called for by the actual crime situation. Juggling with statistics has always been common practice here. Even the interviewer preferred not to notice the absurdity of the figures cited by the general and refrained from asking the simple question: "What happened?"

I can understand the interviewer. By now we have learned to take the statistics coming from those in high places and, in fact, anything they say with a pinch of salt, mildly speaking.

IS GOING ON **WHAT** WILL BE



Drawing by Arkady Gursky

Our newspapers of February 2 could drive any sober-minded person crazy. What's going on? The answer is: nothing. There are no armoured personnel carriers in sight, and no one is going to send them in. There are no submachine-gunners around, and who needs them anyway? Several republics, as well as Ivan Anokhin, the commandant of the Lvov military garrison, refused to comply with the President's decree at all. Sergei Kuznetsov, chief of Leningrad's public order administration, appeared on Leningrad TV to reassure the public that street situation was under control and that there had been not a single riot in the city so far ("touch wood," the militaman added).

But if nothing terrible is going on, or is bound to happen, then why all this, why agitate the population of the country troubled as it is, why cause such a storm of indignation, why even consider the possibility of letting 18-year-olds roam the streets with submachine guns at the ready?

There is even no telling in which case they lie to us – when they sound the alarm and call in the troops, or when they assure us that all is quiet.

WHAT'S GOING ON? Lies do not merely arode souls, they impoverish the nation.

A major is reported to have been tried for espionage. He had tried to commit high treason "in the form of leaking state and military secrets" to a foreign intelligence service. The potential damage he could have done was estimated at over 100 million rubles.

What is there to say to that? It's enough to make cat laugh. One hundred million rubles' worth of potential damage is chicken feed by modern standards. The ruining of the ANT cooperative's deal did us a real damage worth one billion rubles, and no one went on trial for that. Anonymous KGB men cut short a deal which promised our country a profit of seven billion dollars; on top of that, they implicated Gennady Filshin, Deputy Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the Russian Federation, in the affair, thus causing the country further damage worth many more billion dollars. It is against the law to make public even a pickpocket's name until the investigation is over, but Filshin had his name bandied about from the very beginning. The nation sees through the trick, the nation winces and rails at this obvious slander – and the stage-managers of the whole affair realize full well that their motives are common knowledge. This hasn't stopped them, however. They act in the open and go the whole hog in the least of any refutations.

WHAT'S GOING ON? The morning after the fate of 50- and 100-ruble bank notes had been sealed I happened to be in a crowded public place. We talked. Some supported the move, others were against it, still others just sighed, but all agreed on the following. Had Prime Minister Valentin Pavlov been there, I don't know what they would have done to him for having denied the likelihood of reforms shortly before triggering off the bank note exchange panic, when new money bills were already at the printer's.

When told that the whole thing was not a reform at all, just an exchange of bank notes, people really flew off the handle. It brings to mind the sick joke about a prisoner being dragged out of his cell by armed men. "Didn't you promise you wouldn't shoot me?" the man whined. "We shan't," was the reassuring reply. "We always keep our promises. We are going to hang you."

People are sick and tired of all that "philology." One thing is clear – the Minister has lied to them. Without batting an eyelid.

Some may object that he was obliged to keep the scheme secret in the people's own interests.

We have been lied to for decades in our interests until it has dawned on all (except the ministers) that our interests can best be furthered by just one and only thing – the truth.

They have collected eight billion and expect to collect some more. And how many billions will the loss of faith in the government and the moral depreciation of the money cost them? Now its dangerous to keep the money in a savings bank (no one really believes that the savings deposits have been frozen for six months only), let alone at home. So what are we to do? Buy everything in sight – if you are lucky to catch sight of anything! New rumours are denied as fervently as ever and told to be circulated with malicious intent. What do they take us for, imbeciles?

When the results of the referendum on land and on the Union are communicated to us, who will believe them? If other reforms are undertaken tomorrow, who will believe in their expendiency?

There are such things as pocket money, private property, cooperative factories, but the truth is inalienable national property and any encroachments on it in the form of lies, slander, pseudo-refutations, conspiracies of silence and juggling with facts ought to be punished as severely as a major embezzlement of public funds.

WHAT'S GOING ON? WE'VE BECOME A LAUGHINGSTOCK.

The Chairman of the State Bank cracked wise in an interview, gave a lot of solemn oaths, and staked his life on them.

The Chairman of the State Radio and Television Committee was all smiles as he explained – or rather lied about – what the trouble with our television was. The nation's indignation was to that jovial gentleman like water off the duck's back.

The Prime Minister positively burst out laughing when asked about the likelihood of further bank note exchanges. He had the time of his life as he merrily spun yarns about some shop assistants.

The jolly Prime Minister, who had assured us there would be no money reform, killed all hope with just one phrase, which explains why almost 70 percent of the Muscovites – even those who haven't minded the recent money-changing madness – demand his resignation.

They want him out of office not because his bank note exchange scheme has gone wrong, but because he has lied to them all along.

WHAT'S GOING ON? The government has discouraged people from attaching credence to its own words.

Some friends of mine, just back from Paris, told me in round-eyed horror: "We've spoiled it all! Christ, we've again made them afraid of us!"

That was after Vilnius. What will this fear cost us? We can explain things away somehow, we can say that certain forces set us at loggerheads, cash in on our ethnic problems, pour oil on the flames, take advantage of the situation – we can say anything, but the fact remains that over the week which passed between the day the troops were said to be "protecting" the innocent "national salvation committee" and the days when such practices were finally condemned our country suffered enormous material and moral damage.

Why didn't we do that a week before?

WHAT'S GOING ON? Perhaps, the most profund and precise, even though dangerous, answer to this question lies in the extremely laconic (and, therefore, rather hard to grasp) letter contributed by the Armenian politician and political scientist Gaik Kotandzhian to the *Ogonyok* magazine (issue 6). In the few lines of the letter addressed to the journalist Anatoly Golovkin – the lines which should not be allowed to get lost – Kotandzhian defines what is, perhaps, the chief contradiction of our days: "A deep-going conflict between the counter-market nature of the CPSU and the economic objectives it now proclaims."

Indeed, the Party was formed exactly for the purpose of fighting what we now refer to as "the market economy." It all but fell apart into factions after the New Economic Policy had been introduced because its objectives and the market economy are not merely at variance, but poles apart. The Party's world outlook, ideology, Rules, the very Party discipline are incompatible with the concepts of the market economy and private property ownership.

The Communist Party cannot change; what's more, if it is to keep alive, it has to oppose the very idea of a market, the market trends, to restrain the market economy – which it does using all its levers including the last vestiges of Party discipline in its apparat, but chiefly relying on force of arms.

The CPSU is now facing the following dilemma: either it says out loud, for all to hear, that it is against the market economy; or it transforms into a different party, under a different name and with different aims. For as long as it leaves these options open, all that happens on the country's political scene will amount to one solid Big Lie from which other lies will emanate on their own accord.

By withdrawing from the Party, Yeltsin, Popov, Sobchak and others broke loose from that hopeless tangle and rid themselves of the nightmare of trying to combine two irreconcilable concepts into a harmonious whole. The secret of their popular appeal lies in that they tell the truth. For all the accusations heaped on the democrats ("no action, just talk which doesn't fill our shops with goods or clean our streets from litter"), Moscow always looks forward to Tuesdays, the days when Popov, Stankevich, and Luzhkov report back to their constituencies. Their words are of no immediate practical benefit, but people need words, too, because words of truth are also commodities in short supply. There are many criteria to judge any politician by, but today the chief criterion of a politician's worth is the degree of his truthfulness. Let us look at Yeltsin from this angle; he may have his shortcomings, but the fact remains: he has never lied in public.

As for the Party, there is every indication that it is coming back to orthodoxy. There are very special people known as Second Secretaries who always say out loud what the First Secretaries in Moscow think about. According to *Izvestia*, V. Anufriyev, Second Secretary of the Communist Party of Kazakhstan, said without beating about the bush: "It's about time we've got all those pseudo-democrats like Popov and Sobchak out of the way."

Yegor Ligachev has been more specific on that score. Writing in *Komsomolskaya Pravda*, Sobchak quoted him as saying: "When the time is right, we shall have to isolate the few dozen of them – there are hardly more around – so that our people could enjoy a quiet and normal life."

WHAT'S GOING ON? Let me tell you a few words about myself. My father, now deceased, was a journalist, and worked in the literary department of the army newspaper *Krasnaya Zvezda* at the time the war broke out. On June 22, 1941, the first day of the war, he made a round of phone calls in an attempt to commission a poet to write a piece about the war. Finally, he got Vasily Lebedev-Kumach on the phone, and a day later the latter's poem (later to become a song) "Holy War" appeared in the paper – and, simultaneously, in *Izvestia*.

Such a barely perceptible, tiny but, nevertheless, real link with history – through my father – makes me proud, I confess.

So far so good. But on Friday, February 1, I switched on the TV set I'd bought recently (a purchase I now regret) – and saw on its screen some letters blazing like Ku-Klux-Klan crosses in the dark, to the strains of that same "Holy War," with a choir calling on the nation, as it had in wartime, "to go into a life-and-death battle against the accursed dark forces..."

They are calling us to arms again.

Whom are we to fight now? Whom has the Holy War been declared upon? Who are the "dark forces"?

The notorious Alexander Nevzorov and Colonel Victors Alksnis confronted me from the silver screen. The latter was referred to as a man who would still have a role to play – or something like that. Scowling, and egging each other on, and working themselves up by their own conjectures and suspicions (someone had "stolen" a map of dismembering the Soviet Union!), the two men called to a holy war in defence of 75 million Russians living outside Russia proper, in other republics.

It is hard to imagine the plight of those who have, unexpectedly, turned into a national minority or, worse still, into "occupiers." This is an awful predicament.

But why all that talk about "defence" and the "holy war"?

It looked as if the twosome, who had got carried away, did not quite see what would happen if people rise in arms all over our vast country.

Let me make another quotation from the letter by Kotandzhian who knows to his cost what a civil war is (and who, incidentally, had seen action in Afghanistan). He described what would happen if a social revolution did not assume a "civilized peaceful form" and warned that if a civil war was unleashed in the USSR, all its participants would **inevitably suffer defeat.**

All of them would inevitably be defeated... If men like Nevzorov and Alksnis manage to provoke the nation into a civil war, it will kill millions, including those the two modern Herostratoses seek to defend.

Could this guaranteed wholesale destruction and the impossibility to win compel all those concerned to arrive at an agreement, as has been the case with the superpowers? This is Katandzhian's idea, and I'd like to call your attention to it in view of its special importance.

Word came that Nevzorov has been shot at again, this time in Riga. Horrible... As a matter of fact, though, by the official logic accepted today, "thorough analysis should be given to the events preceding the incident," which means that the blame for it should be put on Nevzorov himself. This is exactly the logic whereby the Lithuanians themselves are blamed for having been shot at – they shouldn't have adopted certain laws... By analogy, Nevzorov shouldn't have behaved in a certain way.

This tragical – but, luckily, bloodless – incident shows up the absurdity of the above-mentioned logic. This is crooked logic. There can be no justification for shooting people.

WHAT'S GOING ON? Much is being said about fear. A poet of long ago wrote: "Fears are dying in Russia," a composer set the words to music. Today this is taken as wishful thinking. Now fears are not dying, they are rampant. Fears are bred by lies. Actually, there is nothing more fearful than non-stop cynical lying. In conclusion, may I remind you of three commandments by Solzhenitsyn, the standards he has set for human conduct: Never tell a lie! Never subscribe to a lie! Never support a lie!

Solzhenitsyn's idea was that these commandments ought to be applied by each to himself, and in this sense I have sinned by applying them to others. But in order not to subscribe to a lie, one should be able to recognize it.

Simon Soloveichik

The secret agent who was never exchanged

Stalin made a mistake by not believing Richard Sorge, a Soviet secret agent who worked in Japan, and took revenge on him for his own mistake

Vitaly Chernyavsky

In March 1944, when I began to work in the central apparatus of the Soviet intelligence service, Richard Sorge was still alive, awaiting execution in solitary confinement, at the Sugamo prison in Tokyo. However, the fine agent's name was shrouded in mystery even within the central apparatus.

True, I was enrolled in political intelligence, directed by the First Department of the People's Commissariat for State Security, while Sorge was on the staff of the intelligence department of the Red Army. Engaged in the same work, the two departments did not only vie with one another but also maintained business contacts and often rendered mutual assistance because their operations pursued common goals. For this reason the staff of the People's Commissariat for State Security in the Lubyanka was well informed about many of the affairs of the Red Army's main intelligence department (CID) situated on Znamenka Street and Gogol Boulevard, while the CID's personnel happily discussed the problems of their colleagues from the Commissariat for State Security.

Only seven years later I was able to learn more about Richard Sorge's fate. At the end of 1951 I was called back from my mission abroad and appointed head of the eastern section of the illegal intelligence department at the Information Committee under the Council of Ministers of the USSR. My job was to introduce illegal resident agents and direct their operations from Japan to Iran and Turkey via Hong Kong, Singapore, India and Egypt.

Few people knew about a secret organization established in mid-1947. It was a powerful centre of strategic intelligence abroad formed from the merger of the First Department of the Ministry of State Security and the main intelligence department of the armed forces. The Soviet leadership established the Information Committee as a counter to the US Central Intelligence Agency which was founded two months earlier.

It can be said that the Kremlin and the White House formed their central intelligence bodies simultaneously, for it is difficult to say who first came up with the idea. However, as distinct from the CIA, the Committee of Information existed for only five years. Soon after it was founded the committee began to fall into decline and its status dwindled.

At the end of 1952 the Information Committee was dissolved. Military intelligence agents returned to the armed forces General Staff and political intelligence officers to the Ministry of State Security. Some analysts remained in the diplomatic service.

In short, the central intelligence agency independent of the army and the Ministry of State Security did not last long. Why was this? Why was the agency ousted from the scene by the Ministry of State Security, the Defence Ministry and the Ministry of the Interior? Perhaps the establishment of such an agency was a premature act and now is the right time to find out how it all happened.

The superstar of Soviet espionage

Early in 1952 I read archive documents about Sorge. A talented intelligence agent, a fine journalist, a sagacious analyst, a subtle politician, a striking personality in all respects. Such was the conclusion I drew from the top-secret case of the Tokyo resident agent Ramsay, the pseudonym of Richard Sorge.

In an amazingly short time Sorge built an extensive and clandestine intelligence network in Japan. Two groups numbering 35 people worked under his direction. With the exception of four Europeans, his close aids, the others were Japanese – journalists, officials, businessmen and scientific workers. All of them were opposed to war and tried to foil the intention of the militarist clique to push Japan onto a disastrous course.

Ramsay drew secret information from about 160 sources. Among them were prime minister Prince Konoe, ministers, generals and businessmen. Sorge managed regularly to get important military and political information from the embassy of Nazi Germany in Tokyo. He became a press attaché at the embassy, a close friend and virtually a senior adviser of the German ambassador, who confided state secrets to him.

The network set up by Sorge could not be exposed for almost eight years in spite of close shadowing by Japanese counter-intelligence. The situation in Japan and the world did not allow Sorge to reduce contact with the centre. Radio exchange is a vulnerable point of any resident agent. It could have put counter-intelligence on the trail of the Ramsay group. And so it did. Aware of the danger, Sorge managed to obtain exclusive and important information and pass it to Moscow. Japan, he reported, was concentrating forces for war in the Pacific and preparing to attack the US naval base at Pearl Harbour on the Hawaiian Islands.

During the Second World War and in the early postwar years **VITALY CHERNYAVSKY** was employed in the intelligence service. Later he became a journalist and worked at *New Times* for many years. His article about Richard Sorge is to appear in full in the *Courier of Soviet Intelligence Service*, a supplement to the *Collection of Articles about the KGB*, both published in Russian.

Perhaps Sorge would have survived if he had gone into hiding. But he sacrificed himself and thus helped Moscow to repel the Nazi attack. In his message to the centre Sorge reported that Japan would not join the war against the USSR. It was one of, if not the main argument in favour of Stalin's decision to transport well-trained divisions from the Far East and Siberia to Moscow. It transpired recently that Sorge had also risked his life to obtain information about the impending Japanese attack on Pearl Harbour. Did the Kremlin inform the White House of the imminent danger? Probably not.

The Sugamo prison: Sorge's execution was postponed for over two years

"One man communicates to us..."

The Red Army command and the Soviet leadership did not make timely use of the precise information of the Ramsay group about the date of a Nazi attack on the USSR and the strategic and operational plans of the German command. Why not? The first information about German preparations for aggression was radioed by Ramsay to Moscow in July 1940, five months before Hitler approved the Barbarossa plan and almost a year before June 22. The point is that Moscow did not trust Sorge.

All important messages from Tokyo were immediately passed on to Stalin. Marshal Georgi Zhukov, who headed the General Staff of the Red Army before the war, writes in his memoirs about a conversation he had with Stalin shortly before the Nazi offensive. After Zhukov finished reporting, Stalin remarked: "One man communicates to us very important information about the designs of the Hitler government. However, we have certain doubts about that information. We do not believe it, because, according to our information, he is a double agent."

Georgi Zhukov expressed quite a reasonable opinion: "Stalin probably had Richard Sorge in mind. I learned of him only after the war. He was in fact accused of working both for us and for Hitler." Stalin thought that Sorge also worked for the US or British intelligence service.

Lt. Gen. Filipp Golikov, then chief of the Red Army's intelligence department, wrote in brief on Sorge's radiogram of June 1, 1941, warning about an imminent Nazi attack: "Enter in the list of Ramsay's dubious and misinforming reports."

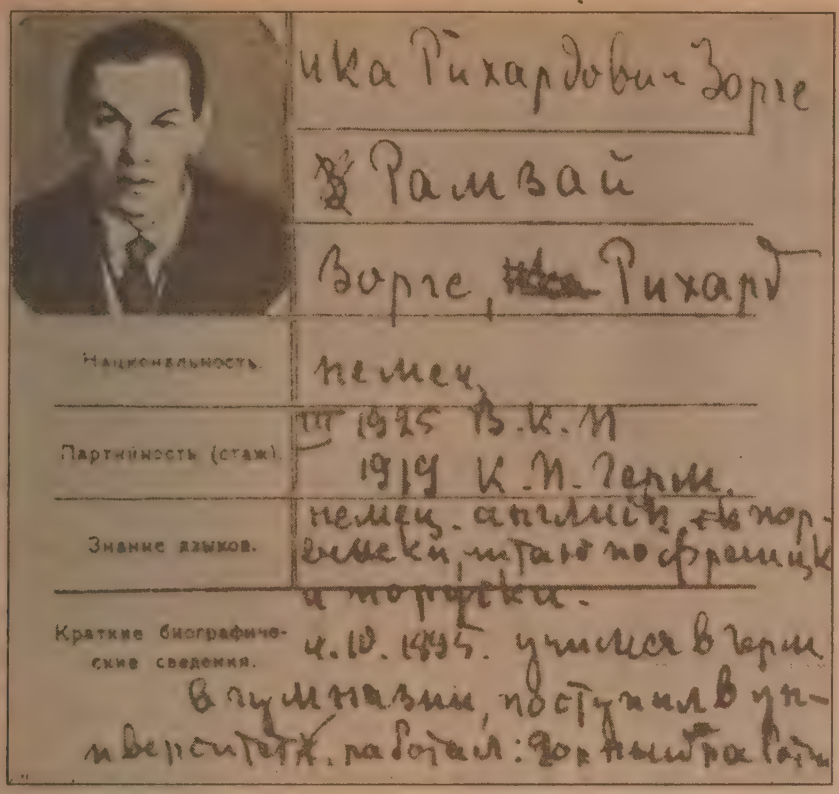
The guarded attitude of some officials of the central apparatus can be understood if we view the situation from the position of the 1930s and early 1940s. For instance, they received information from Germany indicating that Sorge was a Tokyo-based agent of the central security board who supplied the Nazi intelligence service with first-class information. One can read about this in most detail in the postwar memoirs of Walter Schellenberg, former head of the sixth (intelligence) department of the central security board. The chief of the Nazi political intelligence did not make it up. Sorge also supplied information to the German secret service, the foreign ministry of the Reich, and the leadership of the National Socialist Party. The information concerned Tokyo's policy, relations between Germany and Japan, and the activity of the German colony in Japan.

It could not be otherwise. Sorge had to send such information because he was a German journalist and a press attaché of the German embassy. So he had to behave accordingly, and the centre knew that. The following circumstance evidently influenced Moscow's attitude to the Ramsay group. After the conclusion of a pact with Hitler in August 1939, Stalin regarded any information about German preparations for war against the Soviet Union as a lie perpetrated by the West. It was advantageous for them to set the USSR against Germany, he argued, in order to turn considerable forces of the Wehrmacht away from their countries.

The information sent by the Ramsay group was not used. The modest funds allocated to it were cut in half. The group was asked to fulfil tasks of minor importance and to re-check the information already sent by it. Finally, the leaders of the intelligence department decided to recall Sorge from Japan. General Golikov ceased to report his messages to Stalin.

How did Sorge react to the news that his reports containing important military, political and economic information were simply being shelved? He thought that some terrible mistake had been made. Here is what his close aid, radio operator Max Christiansen-Clausen writes: "We reported that at least 150 German divisions had been concentrated near the Soviet border and that war would begin in mid-June several months before the aggression of Nazi Germany against the USSR. One day I came to Richard. We had received a strange radiogram which said – I don't remember word for word – that the possibility of an attack seemed unlikely to the centre. Richard was beside himself with rage. He jumped up, as he always did when he got excited, and exclaimed: 'This is too much.' Richard knew full well what immense losses the Soviet Union would sustain if it did not brace up to repel the attack."

After June 22, the leaders of the intelligence department and, most importantly, Stalin himself, admitted that Ramsay was right. He should be trusted in future for, otherwise, more terrible mistakes could be made. That is why the radiograms he sent to Moscow after June 22 were immediately followed by appropriate actions. Ramsay's information that Japan would not start war against the USSR enabled the Soviet leadership to take an important decision.



Richard Sorge's personal file now kept in the archives of the armed forces' intelligence department

Divisions stationed in the Far East and Siberia were moved to the area near Moscow.

Abel, Blake, but not Sorge

Was it possible to set Richard Sorge free? It will be recalled that Soviet intelligence agents George Blake, who was sentenced to 42 years' imprisonment in Britain, and Heinz Felfe, who was sentenced to 12 years' imprisonment in West Germany, were rescued from captivity. A way was found to liberate Rudolf Abel, who was imprisoned for life in the United States, and Conon Molodiy, who was sentenced to 25 years' imprisonment in Britain.

It is difficult to give a definite answer to this question today, because the material on Richard Sorge has not yet been studied thoroughly. In my opinion, he could have been saved. However, nothing was done to set him free.

Our embassy in Tokyo said nothing, though it turned out after the failure that Sorge was a Soviet citizen. Sorge himself did not conceal that. As far as we know at present, nothing was done by Soviet authorities through unofficial channels, directly or through other countries. Richard Sorge and his close aids Branko Vukelic, Anna and Max Christiansen-Clausen could have been exchanged for Japanese spies arrested and sentenced to imprisonment in the Soviet Union. Tokyo seemed to have been awaiting such an offer from Moscow. The death sentence passed on Ramsay was not carried out for over two years.

In 1964 the veil of secrecy over the feat of Richard Sorge was raised.

The resident agent Ramsay was posthumously awarded the title of Hero of the Soviet Union while his aids, some dead, some alive, were decorated with military orders. Articles and books about the activity of the Ramsay group were published.

In the books put out in the West Sorge was often described as an egoist and anarchist, a rude and despotic superman, a cynical fast liver and simply an adventurer, while in the Soviet Union and East European countries, authors idealized the intelligence agent, portraying him as a staunch communist-internationalist, a champion of superproletarian solidarity, a man without failings, mistakes, doubts or weaknesses.

All this was far from true. Of course, Sorge was an outstanding personality with exceptional qualities. This is true, and his merits have already been mentioned. However, Sorge was also a man with failings and weaknesses typical of ordinary people. Those who knew him well say that he was fond of women and wine. The Japanese counter-intelligence service Kempeitai recorded that during eight years of his stay in Japan Sorge had love affairs with 30 members of the fair sex.

His superiors reprimanded him for this. But maybe Sorge donned the apparel of a Don Juan, drank heavily and conveyed the impression of being a completely open person in order to give himself better cover? It is unlikely that a person having such weaknesses would have made a good spy...

There are different interpretations of Sorge's refusal to obey the order to return to the USSR. Soviet historians usually explain his refusal in the following way: Sorge believed that in those circumstances he had first to fulfil his mission to the end, namely, to find out the plans of Hitler and the Japanese government concerning the invasion of the Soviet Union.

It is also possible that Sorge tried to delay his return to the USSR for fear of being thrown into prison. We should understand his apprehensions. Sorge certainly knew about the mass repression in the USSR. Red Army commanders, top officials of the Soviet intelligence service, many intelligence officers and resident agents were subjected to this. He also knew about defectors – high-ranking officials of the Soviet secret service: Walter Krivitsky, a resident agent in Western Europe, Alexander Orlov, head of the spy network in Spain, Genrikh Lushkov, NKVD commissar for the Far East, who deserted to the Japanese.

Richard Sorge was probably afraid that he might share the tragic fate of many Soviet intelligence men if he returned home. Beria, who hated the brilliant Soviet intelligence agent, subsequently punished Sorge's wife. Yekaterina Maximova, who lived in Moscow, was exiled to the Krasnoyarsk territory, where she died in 1943 as a result of an "accident."

The disobedient intelligence agent was punished too. The centre did not exchange him for Japanese spies, and he was executed in the Sugamo prison in Tokyo. ■

A girl and the President

Two meetings with George Bush which began with a shooting in 1971

"I just had a twenty-minute long conversation with President Gorbachev by phone," George Bush said to me.

We were sitting in large armchairs in the Oval Office of the White House. The fireplace crackled in the back ground. Gathered were President Bush, his press-secretary, Marlin Fitzwater, a man once nominted for the post of director of the CIA, Robert Gates, my husband and I, a correspondent for *New Times*.

I wasn't sure whether my opinion was valued as highly as that of Mikhail Gorbachev, but I answered anyway and the President seemed to be listening attentively. He asked many questions, about Saddam Hussein and the events in the Persian Gulf and about Boris Yeltsin's popularity.

"I'm sorry my special assistant for Soviet Affairs isn't here. She is very busy now given events in the Baltic Republics," he added near the end of our meeting.

We spoke for half an hour and all during the interview I couldn't make myself really believe that I was in the White House.

* * *

It was the second week of January. I was sitting at the home of a friend of mine in New York City, intently taking in the latest news on developments in the Persian Gulf. War seemed unavoidable, but nobody wanted to believe it would really come. Just as in Moscow, rumours were going around that at the last minute Saddam Hussein would have a dream in which Allah would tell him to withdraw from Kuwait or that the French would put forth a convincing argument to him at the last minute convincing him to withdraw. The pictures shown on television were of Baghdad and the latest statement by James Baker and Peres de Cuèllar. Protests in front of the White House were complemented by debates in the Congress where congressmen, just like our people's deputies, argued intensely, gesticulating wildly in an attempt to prove the logic of their point of view. All this was interspersed by ads for the post-christimas sales. My friend Cleo told me of the latest rumours regarding possible Iraqi-inspired terrorist attacks, which in actuality she didn't believe would happen, but nonetheless decided not to fly anywhere and to avoid crowded places.

The melodic ring of the telephone distracted me from my viewing.

"Madame Khilchevskaya?"

"Yes?"

"This is the White House calling. The President would very much like to meet with you."

"With me?!"

"Can you tell us the next time you are planning to be in Washington?"

"I can come right away!.. That is, I mean I can come whenever it is convenient for the President.."

"All right. Tomorrow is Thursday... Say the first half of Friday? We will inform you of the exact time of the meeting later."

The amazed look on my face caused my friend to inquire what the phone call was about.

"What is it? You look as if you've just talked with the President."

"Just about. I'm going to have a meeting with him on Friday."

She didn't find my answer funny and changed the topic of the conversation.

"Cleo, I'm serious! I'm flying to Washington tomorrow and the day after tomorrow I'm meeting with the President. I have to call my husband..."

Interrupted meeting

Sessions of the UN General Assembly are interrupted only seldom, but in 1971, the Assembly's work was interrupted by the announcement by the Soviet representative to the UN of a terrorist attack which was made on the Soviet UN office. He informed the gathered Assembly that on October 20th at 7:55 PM, the Soviet UN office in New York was fired upon. The gunman shot at the apartment of an employee of the Soviet Union. Only his children were home at the time. Fortunately, no one was injured.

...The evening of October 20, 1971, my sister Ira and I and two other girls were sitting in our flat. Our parents were not at home. Ira was lying on the couch and my friend and I were sitting in front of the television. Just then we heard a loud noise. At first I didn't know what was going on and wasn't even frightened by the noise. Even though we lived on the eleventh floor of the building, because of the ever-present roar of lorries and screeching of fire engines from the fire station opposite our apartment complex, we had long since become accustomed to constant noise. So the sound of broken glass didn't even phase me. Ira, who was already thirteen, was the first to think to act.

"Hit the floor," she yelled.

We reacted instantly. My sister crawled over to use the telephone.

Pow-pow. That time I heard the short too. Ira dialed up the office secretary.

"Hello. May I please speak with Khilchevsky?"

"He's at reception. What's happened?

"We're being shot at!"

The person on duty didn't believe her. But just then another shot rang out making a neat hole in the full-length mirror.

"Just a minute," the voice over the telephone stammered.

Five minutes later the place was swarming with people. It was as if everyone who had been invited to the reception came over to visit. Mother appeared from somewhere and hugged me, crying and groping for my sister. The only thing I cared about was seeing the rest of the show I was watching on TV.

The investigators were the last to leave. They spent hours measuring, digging the remains of bullets out of the walls and asking many questions.

The act of terrorism committed against the Soviet UN office caused quite a stir. Articles about it appeared in *Pravda, Izvestia* and *the New York Times*. The Soviet government sent an official note of protest and the then US representative to the UN George Bush, gave a speech condemning the act. Several days later he visited our apartment and met with my parents conveing a formal apology from the American government for the act.

After that, there were many other visits and we received numerous letters and telegrammes from people expressing their sympathy. An open letter was published in the *New York Times* addressed to the children who had been the victims of the attack. I still remember the gist of the letter: You are still young, but when you are older,

The year 1971. The interrupted session of the General Assembly (on the far right, US ambassador to the UN, George Bush; on the far left, a member of the Soviet delegation to the UN, Yuri Khilchevsky. Seated next to him is the Soviet UN ambassador, Yakov Malik)

you will see there is much evil and violence in the world. But it is not evil that runs the world, and you will come to realize that the American people are a kind and sympathetic people.

"Who was it who shot at you?" my friend Cleo asked, interrupting me.

"It was a 17-year old boy named Isaak Yarosevich. He was a member of the International Jewish Defense League. He had been given a semi-automatic rifle with a sniper scope and told to shoot with it.

"What happened to him after that?"

"From what I remember, he was found quite soon after the incident. The judge in the case Morse, if I recall correctly his last name, released him on 25 thousand dollars bail. Isaak's defense attourneys argued that he was a minor and added that no one was hurt in the incident.

"Terrorists don't spare anyone," Cleo noted sullenly. "They especially had to choose a minor so that he wouldn't be given a harsh sentence of caught. And what if he had actually killed someone? The bastards."

Cleo decided that she was putting off her business trip to Germany.

In the Oval Office

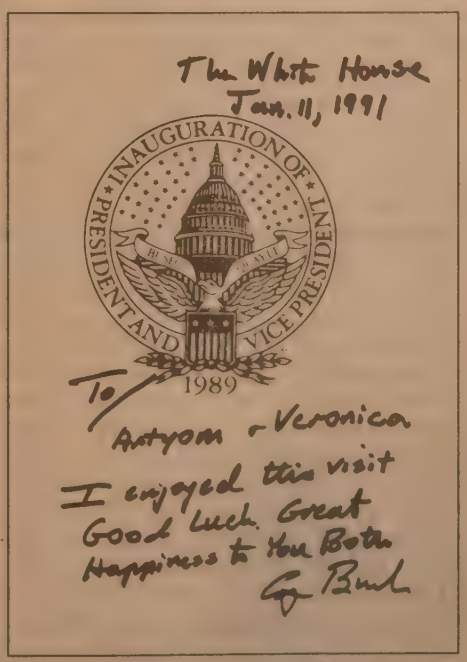
The second call from Washington was from my friends.

"Veronika? You're in New York already? That's great. By the way, has the White House called you yet?"

"Yes. I don't believe it, John. How is it that the President still remembers everything?"

"Wait, I'll read you the reply I received to the letter I wrote. The part about you reads: 'I remember well the dramatic incident that took place in 1971. I also remember the family and their two girls. If they come to the US, I would very much like to meet with them again.' I told him that you and your husband were coming in January. See how easy it was?"

"It really must have been easy," I thought to myself, remembering that October evening in Moscow when I interviewed John and his wife, mentioning to them that I had once met George Bush and that though I was only seven at the time, how I wanted to remind the President that I had once met him and even wanted to meet him, which seemed beyond the realm of all possibility. John told me to write a letter to the White House. I laughed and told him that letters from Moscow took too long to reach the US and that Bush didn't have time to read letters of such little importance. So John decided to act on his own.



I received this book with this inscription as a present from President Bush

It didn't take me long to get ready and the next day I was already in Washington, still in a state of complete disbelief. I told myself: "The world is poised for war, the President is very busy and anything could happen. Most likely, he won't be able to see me." However, all my doubts went away when my hotel-room phone rang and a polite voice from the White House announced.

"The President will see you and your husband tomorrow at 11:30 in the morning," adding: "Your meeting will be very brief."

Friday morning we awoke to pouring rain. Five minutes before eleven, my friend drove up to take us to the White House. Ten minutes later we were standing before the North-West gate of the White House. A guard approached us and we handed him our passports through the gate. Several seemingly endless minutes later we were given passes and told to drive up to the main building. Everything was done orderly and matter-of-factly and my friend's car wasn't even searched. She was simply told to stop ten metres from the entrance and that she was not allowed to enter with us as she didn't have a pass.

In the entrance hallway, a guard politely requested that I show him my purse, patted my husband's coat pockets, exchanged the passes we had for others and let us inside. A few moments later, an elegantly-dressed woman, a Presidential assistant, showed us to the doors of the Oval Office.

And there I found myself standing in the entrance to the famous Oval Office which I had seen many times on television. With what seemed a completely unexpected suddenness, the doors opened and I received a gentle shove from behind which indicated to me that I was to enter.

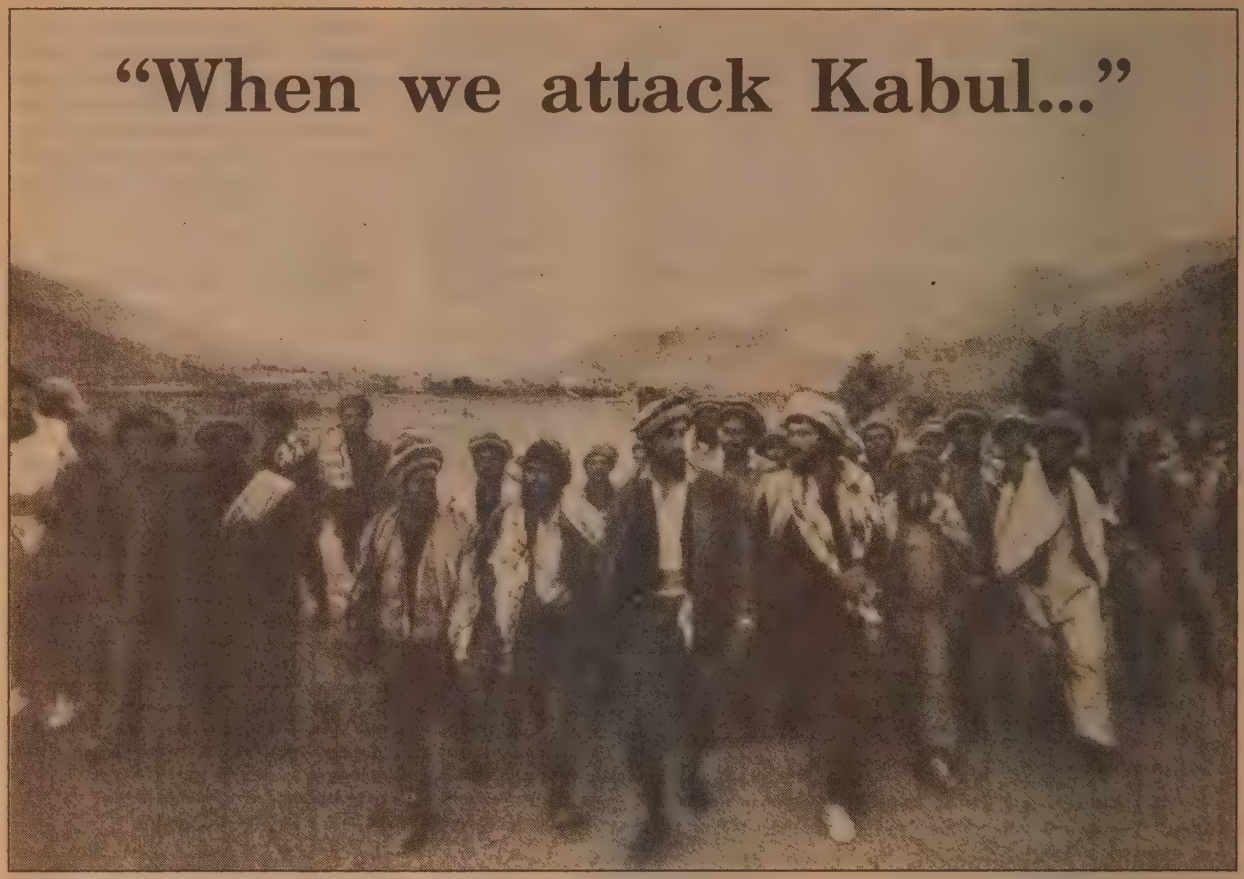
"Hello, Mr. President," I can still hear my shaky, unsure voice...

Veronika Khilchevskaya

NEW YORK–WASHINGTON–MOSCOW

Photo courtesy of author

"When we attack Kabul..."



A rebel group from the Panjsher valley

Photo from the magazine L'Express (France)

AHMED SHAH MASOUD, a mujahedin commander, grants an interview to Afghan journalist **Mukhtar HASSAN** exclusively for *New Times*

This man is an enigma to many people. His struggle against Soviet troops in the Panjsher valley earned him fame as of one of the legendary mujahedin commanders. A truce was once reached between him and the Kabul-based Soviet military command, but after 18 months the Soviet side violated the cease-fire accord. Ahmed Shah Masoud believes that this spell of peace allowed him to consolidate the resistance movement in Afghanistan's North-East and later, after he withdrew from the Panjsher valley, in 13 northern provinces. He was harshly criticized by the leaders of what is now the Pakistan-based Afghan Opposition Government for his having made a deal with the Soviets. His group used to have armed clashes with other resistance groups and he was not seen in either Islamabad or Peshawar for twelve years. In the years of Soviet intervention he used to attract the attention of Soviet representatives in Kabul, while the Kabul government regarded him with caution and apprehension. It was easy to distinguish Ahmed Shah Masoud's people from other freedom fighters: many of them wore Soviet army uniforms bought on the Kabul market. Rumour has it that Ahmed Shah Masoud's representatives are actively buying flour in Kabul for the people living in the regions controlled by Masoud. Ahmed Shah Masoud is said to be one of the few mujahedin field commanders who are aware of their responsibility before the people of Afghanistan. He is 37, married, and the father of a son.

The interviewer, Mukhtar Hassan, heads the Pakistan Bureau of the Afghan Press Agency. Before emigrating to Pakistan, he spent several years in Kabul prisons for his opposition to the ruling regime's policies. He was held in solitary confinement at the Pul-i-Charhi, the Afghan security service prison. Last year Hassan acted as a mediator when he brought information to Moscow about four Soviet POWs held by Gulbuddin Hekmatyar. One of the POWs – Alexei Tikhonov – has returned home and the three others were allowed to correspond with their relations in the USSR.

The meeting of the field commander and the journalist took place in Pakistan where Ahmed Shah Masoud arrived at the end of last year to participate in a conference of field commanders and the Afghan Resistance leaders held under the framework of the Consultative Council (Shura).

Mukhtar Hassan. Your visit to Pakistan and your meetings with the leaders of the Afghan resistance here are being treated as a part of consultations for an integrated strategy of an attack on Kabul. Has any plan for such an attack been elaborated?

Ahmed Shah Masoud. A collective strategy has been devised not only for Kabul but for all cities and towns to dislodge Kabul administration wherever it has got its occupation. In my opinion, at this stage there is a need to conduct well-planned and integrated simultaneous attacks at more than one place. The beginning should be made from the points where the enemy is weakest. Kabul's attack is part of the ultimate programme and whenever conducive conditions exist Kabul would be attacked.

Ahmed Shah Masoud

M.H. The mujahedin have put an end to the occupation of the Soviet superpower in Afghanistan. But why have mujahedin not succeeded in throwing out the much weaker administration of Kabul?

A.Sh.M. In the past, when Soviet troops were operating in Afghanistan, the mujahedin were basically fighting a defensive war. Their target was to render ineffective the Soviet war machine. We were basically fighting a guerilla war in which spending was limited. There were no problems of logistics. Heavy arms and ammunition were not required in great quantities. Now, the mujahedin are faced with new tasks and they have to play the role of an attacking force for which advanced preparation has not been made, either politically or militarily. I regret to say that although our Afghan leaders remained active over the last two years in Afghanistan they could not devise a proper political and military future strategy, and could not prepare themselves for the new phase. Without this preparation after the pullout of the Soviet troops the best opportunities and possibilities were wasted in short-term objectives. For example, the war at Jalalabad and Khost rendered no result. The absence of a proper strategy against the enemy is the real source of concern for the field commanders. Each of them gathered the people in his area together and discussed the issue. As a result of such meetings several commanders from all over Afghanistan, including myself, gathered in the liberated area along Pak–Afghan borders. After detailed discussions, the commanders' meeting chalked out a political and military strategy. I am sure: if this is implemented as the Jehad leaders have agreed to the proposal, positive results will ensue.

M.H. Why have you not visited Pakistan over the last 12 years?

A.Sh.M. I was very busy there and I did not make up my mind to come over here, though my companions of Jehad all over Afghanistan and Pakistan kept on insisting that I visit Pakistan. Furthermore, our leader Prof. Burhanuddin Rabbani directed me to come to Pakistan and consequently I decided to come here with the purpose of meeting the leaders of the Afghan Jehad and presenting my new programme to them. By the grace of Allah Almighty I had the opportunity to meet all such people during the few weeks of my stay in Pakistan and I presented my viewpoint to them. Most of them agreed to my proposals. However, some leaders have their reservations.

M.H. What are their reservations?

A.Sh.M. For example, what should the qualities of the character of a commander be? I think, a commander should be introduced as having links with an organization or, if he had got the strength, then he could directly participate in the strategy. Similarly there were some matters relating to the training of the mujahedin.

M.H. Do you hope these matters will be sorted out?

A.Sh.M. These are minor things. The real strategy is that the mujahedin have to prepare themselves for coming out of the defensive position and entering the phase of an offensive posture. This principle has been accepted in total. We have to switch over to the offensive strategy to capture cities and towns for which the formation of regular armed forces is needed. All the commanders would have to raise an army. This is their responsibility.

M.H. Would there be a Commander-in-Chief in the case of forming an army?

A.Sh.M. The issue will be tackled by next spring when the meeting of commanders is held. For the time being Commander Moulawi Jalaluddin Haqqani has been assigned the task of keeping contact with commanders. This was decided by the consultative council of the commanders which I have mentioned earlier.

M.H. Do you feel the need of reconstituting the Afghan interim government?

A.Sh.M. The interim government in its present shape is unacceptable. There is a need to make it broad-based and various changes in its ministries and their work are required. If the leaders of the interim government do not find the way to change, then there could be another shura.

M.H. Are elections possible in the liberated areas of Afghanistan in the present situation?

A.Sh.M. Yes, they are. I think, in 13 provinces of Northern Afghanistan and in the central provinces of Parwan and Kapisa elections are possible. In this connection an agreement has been finalized with the Hezb-e-Islami (headed by Hekmatyar.– **Ed.**).

M.H. What are the weak and strong points of the Najib administration?

A.Sh.M. The differences and rifts in the ranks of mujahedin are their biggest weakness, similarly, the serious rifts within the Najib clique are their weak point. The Khalq and Parcham factions have their differences and the Parcham faction is further split by differences. In addition to this linguistic-based Sittam-e-Milli Party who are opposed to Pushtoons being Persian speaking operate in Afghanistan. It is not possible for Najib to keep his administration intact as unity. Besides, there are other factors. The Afghan masses have totally rejected the plan of national reconciliation presented by Najib. It should be remembered that the Najib clique have massacred over a million people. Another weak point of the Najib administration in the political field is its affiliation with the Soviet Union. I personally think that the Soviets do not want to prolong the war in Afghanistan to sustain the Najib administration. But whatever decision the Soviets make it would be an order and directive for the Najib administration.

However, the Najib regime has its strong points. One is that although it is a weak administration, it is a government and it has got central organization and authority. The help and assistance extended to it by the Soviets are beyond anyone's expectations. The Najib regime has the best modern weapons in its possession in sufficient quantities, which is a remedy to its military weaknesses to a large extent, so much so that it has a superiority in arms over the mujahedin. In addition to this, the

factor which has mostly benefitted the Najib regime, is the serious rifts in the ranks of the mujahedin.

M.H. The Soviets have a long experience of defence by remaining in the state of a siege which they learnt during the Second World War... The same lesson now Soviets have taught to Najib. The Najib administration is in the state of siege in Kabul, Jalalabad, Kandahar, Herat and other big cities and towns but it is still surviving. What is your opinion?

A.Sh.M. The Soviet people and the armed forces were united against the invading external enemy. Here the people are contending against the government troops and they are not strangers to each other.

Even from a purely military viewpoint your comparison is not correct. I have studied the siege of Leningrad to understand the war strategy. Your comparison is not in accordance with the real situation.

M.H. Today the world is aware of your great struggle. However, little is known about how you joined the Afghan resistance.

A.Sh.M. *(after some hesitation)*. When in 1973, Sardar Daud staged a coup d'etat with the help of the communists and the Soviet Union and took over the government in Afghanistan. I was studying in the second year of the Kabul Politechnical Institute. I had to go underground because of my Islamic ideas and spent six months in Afghanistan at different places. In the beginning of 1974, I came to Pakistan and then returned to Afghanistan. In the summer of 1975, we started an armed struggle in Panjsher with the help of some companions and liberated Rukhu, the centre of Panjsher valley, and the Hissa Awal district. But obviously this occupation could not have been continued. I had to emigrate to Pakistan again. In April 1978, Taraki staged a coup d'etat and captured the government. After a few months I proceeded to Afghanistan and once again started armed resistance from Panjsher. We were a total of 30 in the valley. The arms and the materiel with which we started the Jehad included an automatic rifle G-3, five other rifles and nine guns. It means that out of 30, fifteen people were scantily armed.

On the way to Panjsher two of us purchased two kalashnikov rifles out of our own pocket. In Panjsher, our companions had arranged two RBG-7 anti-tank rocket launchers but we had only seven shells and five thousand rounds.

Prof. Rabbani gave us a total of one lakh Afghanis (about 12,000 rupees in Pakistani currency). With this preparation we started Jehad from Panjsher.

Then after a few years it was the same Panjsher, where the Soviet Union in the presence of its mighty war machine, was compelled to arrive at an agreement on ceasefire with us.

Well, the rest is history...

The aborted deal

Why seven Soviet POWs did not return home

Ahmed Shah Masoud is by right known as one of the most flexible field commanders around: he has never rejected offers of talks with the enemy. Two years ago the USSR Public Coordinating Committee for the Liberation of Soviet Servicemen Captured in Afghanistan started negotiations with the Panjsher Valley commander on the release of Soviet POWs held by his group. The number of Soviet POWs held by Ahmed Shah Masoud is estimated at between 7 and 12. Seven POWs are definitely known to be there. Here is the story of how the negotiations proceeded.

In September 1989, Lord Nicholas Bethell, well known to *New Times* readers, volunteered to act as a mediator between the Soviet government, the government of President Najibullah and the Afghan interim government based in Peshawar, in negotiations concerning the fate of the POWs. He informed the Coordinating Committee in his letter, which said:

"The most important gesture of good faith would be for the Kabul government to release into my care a small number of prisoners, especially those with close family or other links with the mujahedin leaders... It would also be useful if I could take to Peshawar a list of names of mujahedin fighters and political prisoners held by the Kabul authorities, including those arrested in 1978-79, of whom there has been no news for more than ten years."

There is no need to mention the fact that the Coordinating Committee did its best to prepare Lord Bethell's trip to Kabul. The Najibullah government did release into the lord's care three prisoners who had spent years in the Pul-i-Charhi prison. After all, all the sides involved are interested in solving the problem of the POWs as soon as possible. The lord handed the three former prisoners to the International Committee of the Red Cross mission in Kabul and they were allowed to return to their resistance groups. The Peshawar opposition released two Soviet POWs, V.Prokopchuk and A.Lopukh, which *New Times* also mentioned. It seemed that the plan would be a success and some progress was indeed made. A month later Lord Bethell came to the USSR once again. Here are some excerpts from the interview he gave to *New Times* dated December 1989:

"Lord Bethell, you have met many Peshawar commanders. Do any of them have a plan of POWs' exchange or release?"

"The most interesting plan was suggested by the Panjsher field commander, Ahmed Shah Masoud. I met his brother in Peshawar. Ahmed Shah Masoud says he is prepared to release all the Soviet POWs – seven men – on condition that his followers kept at Pul-i-Charhi and other Afghan prisons would be released in return by the Najibullah government. They number about 200–300. However, he does not want to submit the list of their names fearing possible repressions against them. Ahmed Shah Masoud suggests the following: Kabul makes up a list of all prisoners and sends it to Masoud. Masoud marks his men from among those listed. I know that the Najibullah government has such a list. The Interior Minister even quoted the exact number to me: 2,561 people. I will do my best to get this list. I believe that a normal law-abiding government must not keep secret the names of people it holds prisoner."

"The opposing side, of course, can be reproached for doing exactly the same..."

"Yes, it can. Ahmed Shah Masoud, though, is not an official head of state, he is a leader of an underground group. By the way, he promised to make me up a list of the POWs kept by his group."

Before I went to Kabul in January 1990 I phoned Lord Bethell. He said that Ahmed Shah Masoud had the list prepared and asked to find out whether the Kabul government had made up its list and to negotiate the procedure for the exchange of the POW lists. The most acceptable option was to use diplomatic channels: for instance the POW lists could be exchanged via the Afghan embassy in London.

In Kabul I was to meet members of the National Renewal Commission headed by Kulmuguddin Ishakzai, member of the National Council of the Republic of Afghanistan. The Commission included two representatives from each of the provinces controlled by Kabul plus fifteen other people, many of whom were members of parliament. The fifteen members made up the Commission's executive body. The

Commission is completely independent from the government.

"Our Commission can establish relations between the current government and the opposition, so as to set up, on a broad basis, a new national executive body," said Kulmuguddin Ishakzai. "We have already established contacts with a number of field commanders and we are negotiating with Afghan in Pakistan and Western Europe. We were the first to look into the problem of Soviet POWs. We would not have taken up the problem, had we not been sure that the efforts in this direction were worth taking and could be a success".

"What is your attitude to Lord Bethell's plan?"

"When I met the lord for the first time in Moscow I understood what kind of a person he is and whom he supports; actually he has never concealed his interests. I believe that such problems must be solved by diplomatic means on the basis of the two sides' mutual interests. Ahmed Shah Masoud asked 300 his men for the Soviet POWs. We believe that he must make up a list of all people in his captivity. We will make up our own list and we will make decisions after we have compared our notes. While doing this, I believe, we must arrive at a reasonable balance of interests. We could send a representative to Ahmed Shah Masoud, but we have no money. In fact, when we were in Moscow, representatives of the Soviet Peace Fund promised us some financial support"...

When in Kabul, I found out that the Commission and even the MPs – members of the Commission could not ask the government for the list of prisoners until the opposing side had made up its list...

The exchange of POW lists between the Najibullah government and Ahmed Shah Masoud never took place. We know the names of the Soviets kept in the field commander's captivity, but nothing more...

Last spring Ahmed Shah Masoud suggested another variant. He suggested that one Soviet POW be exchanged for his close relative held at Pul-i-Charhi plus 11 more people specified by the relative. Lord Bethell informed us of the proposal and we promptly sent this information to Kabul. The answer from Afghanistan came in autumn: President Najibullah agreed to the proposal, but the time had been missed. After all the good will and flexibility of any field commander have some limits.

In the summer one more Soviet representative visited Peshawar and negotiated the fate of the Soviet POWs – member of the Supreme Soviet of the Russian Federation, Chairman of the All-Union Association of Families of the Prisoners of War, Iona Andronov. I do not know exactly what he discussed with the opposition leaders, but his interviews with various newspapers provide some hints. He invited a delegation of the opposition government to visit Boris Yeltsin and assured the delegation that all arms supplies to Afghanistan from the territory of the Russian Federation would be halted. The other side expected Iona Andronov to give such promises and he gave them; this being a clear example of how negotiations should not be conducted and of how we usually negotiate. Now we have an unfulfilled promise on our heads. It is very difficult to explain to the opposition that while in Peshawar, Iona Andronov had no right to speak on behalf of our government. Defence plants are controlled by the Union authorities and are not within the jurisdiction of the Russian Federation's parliament. Moreover, the Soviet Union **is not giving** weapons to Afghanistan for free, but **sells** weapons on credit, hoping that Kabul will pay some time in the future... We have received a telegram from Pakistan:

"Commander Masoud told the ICRC delegation that he would not negotiate the fate of the Soviet POWs until the Soviet Union changed its policy vis-a-vis Afghanistan... The delegation was allowed to speak to the POWs and to take their letters to their families."

The US State Department uses special negotiators charged with problems of hostages. The United States, and the Soviet Union too by the way, is familiar with the situation when the side keeps prisoners and uses them to pressure the superpower into political concessions or economic aid. Besides the negotiations proper, the hostage negotiator must separate the humanitarian aspect of POWs or hostages from all the political and economic wrappings. The Soviet Union has no such experience because it was never really concerned with the fate of its citizens abroad. Now the Soviet Union even has a public movement trying to influence the government. Negotiations are a difficult business, however. Former Soviet ambassador to Kabul, Yuli Vorontsov, tried to make the first step. The attempt was successful; it demonstrated that means other than weapons could be used in dealings with the Afghan opposition. The problem of POWs could be discussed. However, Vorontsov is no longer the Soviet ambassador to Afghanistan. Who will continue the negotiations?

It was proposed about six months ago that an ad hoc committee for the relief of POWs be set up in this country. Two variants are suggested: the commission may either, be attached to the Presidium of the USSR Supreme Soviet, or subordinated directly to the President. The latter choice seems wiser. A presidential commission will not depend on changes in the composition of the Supreme Soviet and will be able to unite experts from all ministries and departments concerned. Naturally, the commission must include a member charged exclusively with negotiating the humanitarian aspect of the problem. Soviet people have been in captivity in Afghanistan and Ethiopia for years. Some Soviets are rumoured to be missing in action in Angola as well. What about Iraq? What will the fate of Soviets posted there be like? After all, a Lord Bethell convinced that the keeping of Soviet POWs damages the political image of the Afghan resistance will not always be around.

Returning to Ahmed Shah Masoud, I would like to hope that not all chances have already been passed up. Lord Bethell shares my hopes. Recently he faxed me a message: "I shall continue my efforts and I will be waiting for better times."

Irina Lagunina

Lord Bethell with three former Pul-i-Chirhi prisoners released into his care by President Najibullah

Introduced by *New Times* analyst **Rostislav Zolotaryov**

Insofar as religious, like national, contradictions are as old as Adam, they are the most lasting of all, which is why the related conflicts resolve with such difficulty. How many times over the centuries has blood been spilled and continues to be spilled. But are these contradictions the one and only cause? After all, intentive, unbiassed analysis will reveal that by no means religious distinctions trigger off such tragic clashes. From the angle of history, ideological, and cultural conflicts, to which religious conflicts also relate, may be taken for granted and as such are not the initial source of aggressiveness, especially as regards such major cultural pehnomena rooted on what could be called global faiths whose creeds endorse peace and love.

The whole trouble is that frequently the different faiths are taken as cover and vindication for dominant groups, as an instrument for maintaining a definite social order and endorsing political interests and ambitions, designs of conquest or defensive strategies. That is where the "enemy image" evolves in this historical concept.

The ages-old confrontation between Christianity and Islam, shored up by long years of military strife and economic contradiction, also brought no small number of stereotypes into being. Westerners often note what they call Islam's "fanaticism" its "initial intolerance." That actually is tantamount to shaping a notion of Christianity on the basis of the Crusades and the Inquisition. One must certainly not overlook what Islamic culture has given the world, more specifically the Christian world. Even during the Moorish conquest of Spain and the frequent armed clashes between the European and Moslem countries, intensive cultural interchanges confined between them. Indeed, that great Arab philosopher ibn-Khaldun may indeed be considered a predecessor of Locke and Montesquieu.

There follow excerpts from a series of articles under the common title of "The Fanaticism of Islam and Its Attitude Towards Non-Moslems" that the Azerbaijan scholar Ahmed Beq Agaew wrote in 1902 to surmount contradictions between the different cultures, more specifically between Moslems and Christians.

A few words now about their author. Ahmed beq Agaew was a prominent political and civic figure in Azerbaijan.

A Sorbonne graduate, he returned home to become a leader of the national democratic movement. He was persecuted by the police for attacking tsarist autocracy yet was also harassed by nationalist extremists. In 1909 he had to emigrate, returning only when Azerbaijan declared independence. However, after the 1920 revolt he had to emigrate again. He lived abroad until his death.

The following excerpts, from the Baku-based journal *Hazar*, were prepared for *New Times* by Gyundaz Tairli.

FROM THE XXth CENTURY POLITICAL THOUGHT

About Islam without fanaticism

Ahmed Beq Agaew (1869–1939)

Firmly implanted in society, especially in the middle classses, is the notion that Islam is fanatically intolerant. All believe that it instils sentiments of exclusiveness and hostility towards other faiths. Ask anyone you please what he thinks of Islam and he will say: "Why, that is a teaching of sword and fire which urges the ruthless extermination of followers of other beliefs!" In the view of the Babbitry, each and every Moslem is inevitably a robot, a feelingless clot, whose only thought is to fight the rest of the world, who is unable to extricate himself from the blinders of the few ideas his religion instils or to respect the ideas, feelings, lives, science, art and an education of others, in short, a person steeped in a world of enchantment that is alien and hostile to all of humanity.

How fair is that view?

The importance attaching to this question becomes obvious when we realize that a key segment of humanity, some 300 million people follow Islam and its principles in their ethics and attitudes to the rest of the human race. If it is truly so that Islam is exclusively negative with nothing but hate felt by its numerous proselytes for the rest of the human race, then it is unquestionably harmful and ugly, and it behooves everyone to fight it, otherwise our bias and prejudice are as harmful, ugly and malicious, as that ullusion of evil against which we are prejudiced: indeed, a priori concepts and prejudices comprise the same kind of religion, but without dogma, the same kind of teaching, but without its high priests: in this case the altar is our own heart and we ourselves are the proselytes. Bias and prejudice transform us into automata and intolerant fanatics of a far worse order than the fanatic adherents of an arch-fanatic teaching. Our prejudices and bias always stand between us and those against whom we are prejudiced: they damage our relations with them, impel us to unfairly assess their good qualities, services and merits, and now and again, plant outright hostility towards them. History has well demonstrated the misunderstandings which at times persist for centuries and that such sentiments may generate and not only between individuals, but even beween various groupings, nations and states. How hard it was for European essayists and philosophers to get Europeans and Americans to realize that the redskins and blacks are as human as whites, subordinate to the same feelins and sufferings. Did not the North in the USA take up arms against the South because of these same ideas, that are now within reach of all? And nowadays is not the main reproach addressed to Britain over her alliance with Japan, the circumstance the noblest woman of the white race demeaned herself by marrying a man of the yellow race? Evidently Japan is similarly reproached by fanatics of the yellow race for a Japanese woman lending herself to the caresses of the white devils.

Like-minded sentiments generate ... prejudice against Islam and its followers, and in this brief space we seek to answer the

question raised as to whether it is justified by Islam and the Koran as its bedrock source. However, we shall first regard Islam as a teaching that has furnished certain forms of human thought comprising a definite stage in the history of culture. To establish a historic relationship and link between the different stages, designate the entity and community of human thought in its various forms and hues and, finally, contribute as best able to the gradual comprehension and obliteration of those walls of alienation, exclusiveness and mutual misunderstanding which arise by virtue of unfavourable historical change between people striving for the same goal of "infinite progress," such is the sole real purpose of our essay about Islam.

Over now to the facts. Ask anyone of those prejudiced against Islam, of those "convinced" of its hate for the rest of the human race, wherefrom his "conviction" stems and he, embarrassed, will inevitably reply with the general notion that this is recorded in their holy Book, the Koran. Where exactly, on what page, in which chapter? He cannot say simply because as we shall see later, the Koran proclaims the opposite to his convictions. He will simply be ashamed to admit that this is what he heard from parents or people with whom he mixes and that in his relationship to Moslems he notes a certain estrangement. He fails to realize withal that the Moslem in turn hears from parents and friends the same about followers of other faiths and that when two such "prejudiced" people meet, there must inevitably arise the estangement complained about. Revealed in both is the atmosphere, the trend, and the mood, with which history has enveloped them over the ages. Religion has nothing to do with it at all.

Bias and prejudice always arise between us and those against whom we are prejudiced

The fact is that Islam was first to awaken the Arabs. Cut off from the rest of the world by deserts on the one side and seas on the other, the Arabian Peninsula was for long steeped in lethargic uninvolvement in world affairs. Though the greatest of revolutions and stupendous perturbations occurred all around, though empire after empire declined and religion after religion collapsed, like a God-forsaken place, it remained untouched wrapped in the shifting winding cloth of its deserts, content with itself and its own crude forms of life. With the most beneficial climatic and living conditions for a healthy life, the Arabs accumulated over the centuries physical and mental energies and powers. By awakening these energies and powers and casting them into the world arena, Islam bursts the dam restraining the accumulated forces and provided them with a free field for action. The Arabs hurled themselves into the world arena headlong with characteristic fervour. They were so powerfully obsessed with the desires for conquest that this even affected the prophet Mahomet when in Mecca. Yet at no time did he preach anywhere an offensive, let alone relentless, war. His followers did not heed his call and failing to adhere strictly to his teaching, were increasingly engrossed in conquest; yet that throws into still greater relief his basic ideas, augments their significance still more and demonstrates once again that the divide between the ideal and life, ever attends human nature. Indeed, however powerful and dominant religion may be, the human being nevertheless remains its most active factor, who never completely relinquishes his individuality, and who always seeks to refashion religion and teaching to his own cut and according to his own needs. Which incidentally explains the emergence of sects and diverse teachings, within the fold of the same faith. Now and again the teacher and his followers so greatly diverge in their views that the link between them snaps. By way of confirmation I could adduce many instances from the history of Christianity, the ordinances of councils and the teachings of the fathers of the Church, both from their lives and later on, in medieval times. However, we shall confine ourselves to a contemporary fact. The year before last, at the very start of the Anglo-Boer war a British bishop demonstrated by quoting the Scripture and the teachings of the Fathers of the Church in a "Contemporary Review" contribution that Christianity acknowledges not only defensive wars, but even the most ruthless of offensive wars. Though of course the writer had to stretch points time and again and "exert brain and casuistry" to arrive at this conclusion, he nevertheless propounded it evoking admiration. We have furnished this illustration solely to show that even teachings that would not appear to succumb to casuistry may be adapted to time-serving sentiments, which, in turn, develop into tradition and a common trend with the passage of time.

It is the same with Islam. When the physical and mental powers of the Arabs petered out, the race degenerated, Islam was taken over by the no less primitive and war-like tribe of the Turko-Tartars, who, in turn remade it to suit their own interests. Meeting them headlong from the West was the no less war-like Anglo-German race. Involved in a protracted, at times stupendous struggle, the two were "convinced" that the other was an enemy. The ruthless attitude transferred the "conviction" to the religions espoused. Hence, to form a notion of Islam's real spirit and attitude to the followers of other faiths, one must go to the two fountheads, to Mahomet's Meccan chapter and the Koran.

For a very long time Arabia was not involved in the stupenduous metamorphoses and world developments that took place around it. In its sleep the life of the Arabs assumed a delirious form cast in bold relief in their religious outlooks. Thus in the fifth and sixth centuries they became the most crude fetishists, worshipping everything that amazed their bodily feelings, age-old trees, large slabs of stone and rock, caves, antlered deer, stars, the sun, the desert echo known as the gulibiabani, etc. Only hazy reminiscences were retained even of the old more elevated worship of the stars, imported much earlier from Babylon.

The insatiable thirst for blood of such vengeful divinities as Al-Mapash, Uzza and Shama Tariq took annual toll of the lives of many babes and youths. There is nothing to show that veneration of these idols would have been rooted in any more or less consciously accepted lofty abstract idea. The Arab masses genuflected before the idols as autonomous beings. That did not instill in the minds of this extraordinarily gifted poetic and artistic nation a single creative idea or a single one of those magnificent inimitable monuments of architecture or poetry with which the Arabs were to astound the entire world later.

Gradually there emerged among the Arabs a teaching that preceded Islam and that is known in history as Khanifism which was professed for the most part by the rich clan of Koreishites who were politically dominant in Mecca. Talented and inquisitive, they spent their leisure time in meditation and a critical analysis of surrounding life. Coming into contact with Christians, Jews and Zoroastrians during their trading ventures, they studied their lives, mentalities and religions. Also in Mecca and other Arab cities one

found Christian slaves as well as Jews who stood high on the social ladder by virtue of wealth. The Khanifites believed in one God and the afterlife, cast down the Arab idols and ridiculed heathen cults. Yet as aristocrats by birth and standing, with a direct stake in the preservation of the existing order as guaranteeing them dominion, influence and wealth, they adhered outwardly to all the niceties of the religion of their fathers jealously guarding it against every encroachment. In short, their attitudes paved the way for the appearance of such a sincere devout soul as Mahomet who would be capable of re-fashioning life.

Mahomet was accepted into Khanifist society from infancy. Indeed, poor and relatively young, his aristocratic origins, the honour in which his parents were held and finally, his personal qualities ensured him an honourable place among the Khanifites, with whom he also visited Christians and Jews. Living at the time in Mecca were two Christians, the manumitted Juber and Yassar, both toolsmiths by trade, and the rich Jew Abd al-Salam. Mahomet enjoyed their cordial friendship and when not concerned with his own sustenance spent all his free time with them discussing religion, listening to their stories from the Old and New Testaments and to the excerpts read from the Scriptures. One can easily imagine the excitement and perturbation of ideas, sentiments and thoughts that such conversations evoked in this highly talented, sincere, enthusiastic spirit. Such was the first seed planted in his heart which forever set the scene for all of his future activity.

Mahomet's teaching never preached wars of conquest, let alone ruthless wars

However, subsequent impressions brought nothing but disillusionment. The sects squabbling among themselves throughout Byzantium were strange and fanciful; disputing ownership of the truth they denounced and refuted one another, and in heated argument besmirched basic principles. The Jews were no exception; as they also failed to live according to their books, especially as concerned negation of Jesus and his teaching. At this juncture this impressive contemplative spirit indulged in meditation which thus impelled him to evolve a stupendous, harmoniously integrated system reconciling all basic principles and explaining all strife and contradictions. According to his teaching, all the prophets from Jacob and Moses to Jesus preached naught but the truth and were all dedicated to God whose behests they transmitted, behests that reduced to the belief in one God, the afterlife, the immortality of the soul, and the ultimate triumph of good over evil. The only difference lay in their language, the way in which they were expressed, and the details which changed with the passage of time: however, the substance remained and it was for the prophets to endlessly develop this substance, make it flesh of the flesh and blood of the blood of the people, making them Godlike. However, people failed to comprehend this and the moment one or another of the prophets departed, their followers mutilated their basic thoughts and introduced strife. Mohamet's mission was to restore these bedrock truths, to re-declare them to all and associate Arabia with the human family.

How did Christians and Jews react to him and his aspirations? A study of the Prophet's life will necessarily reveal that from his very start when his own kin were hostile Christians and Jews entertained a sincere liking for him, supporting him and regarding him as their own. As was said earlier, the two Christians living in Mecca were Mahomet's personal friends. At the outset the many Jews living in Mecca, Medina and their neighbourhoods openly and enthusiastically supported Mahomet until he indicted their vices. To provide his following with an example, Mahomet married the Christian girl Maria and had his nearest associates wed Christian and Jewish girls. Thus Osman, the third Caliph and Talkha were married to Christian girls, whereas Hazifa married a Jewess. Over now to the Koran. Firstly note that when reading all its verses and comparing their contents we find that most is consecrated to the Old and New Testaments, to the Prophets, especially the later prophets, to Moses, David, Zacharius, Jesus, and the Holy Virgin. Mahomet is so full of sincere praise for them, that one has not the shadow of a doubt as to his profound belief in them. Further, in these chapters of the Koran he elaborates upon his favourite theory of the unity of faith.

Take for instance: "Mankind is one. God sent his prophets and heralds to them with the Book for them to lead mankind along the road of faith and truth, and administer fair and righteous judgement. Yet, having received these redeeming guides, people stirred up strife out of greed. God will save the truly devout." Or this and another verse: "The book has been sent to reaffirm the Bible and Gospel sent before. Truly have the Bible and Gospel been sent to save man. The Koran has been sent for this same purpose.

"Say: I believe in God, I believe that it has been sent to Thee, that it has been sent to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, Jesus and all the other prophets. There is no difference between them." This verse repeats itself in nearly each chapter of the Koran, as if the Prophet deliberately insisted upon the identity of idea and thought to forestall every subsequent possible misunderstanding on this score.

"The Prophets were neither Jews, nor Christians, nor Moslems, but men of faith, dedicated to God's will."

"The call is not important, neither important is whether you turn your face to East or West in prayer. Important is belief in God, the afterlife and the doing of good, charity, and piety."

These instances leave no doubt as regards the brotherly unity between Christians, Jews and Moslems, of which Mahomet dreamed, or of the idea he throws into such relief in the Koran. "All believers, Jews, Christians and generally all believing in the one God and doing good truly, shall they all be saved and have nought to fear."

These words warrant the thought that no teaching, no religion, claiming divine origin, could transcend these limits of tolerance.

So can we, when perusing all that, still attach significance to uncouth malicious shouts as to the supposedly deep-rooted implacability between Christianity and Islam, which alas, continues even in this enlightened day and age of ours?

■

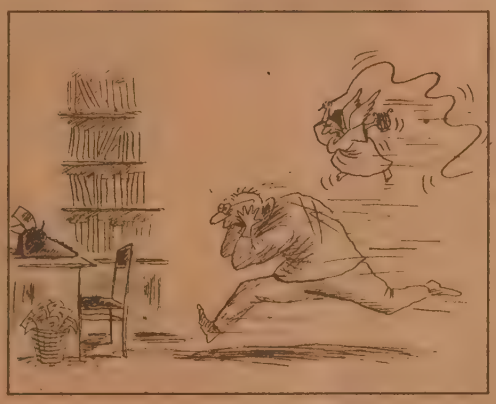
Taxation woes

Lawlessness makes itself felt not only in sensational events but also in such modest trifles as instruction on the collection of taxes

The law on income tax was signed on April 23, 1990, and the law on state taxation inspections, on May 21. It was repeatedly mentioned about the severity of both laws, about their particular ruinousness for the development of culture and I am not concerned with this now. The law must be respected whether it is bad or good. We often seek consolation in such formulas, hoping that obedience to the law will serve to create order and stability. But how can we speak about maintaining law and order when the state which adopted these laws violates them straight away, demanding from taxpayers more than envisaged by the law.

Published recently was an instruction for taxation inspection on the regulations of submitting a declaration on incomes and these regulations already run counter to the law. The law has been enforced beginning **July 1,1990,** and in the resolution on bringing it into force, there is a special reservation stating that payment for work done until July 1 is taxable in the old way. However, the taxation inspection demands that information on earnings be submitted for the whole of 1990. But the law is not retroactive and the taxation inspection has no right to demand from citizens information not covered by law.

According to instruction, failure to declare one's full income entails payment to the treasury of the amount equal to the undeclared income plus the same sum as a fine. Again the trouble is not that the punishment is too severe, but that there is no mention anywhere that confiscation and the fine are imposed only for the concealment of incomes subject to **additional taxation.** Under the law only incomes exceeding 8,400 rubles a year, i.e., 700 rubles per month, are additionally taxable. So, is it possible to punish a writer who declared that he had earned 3,600 rubles, but in reality earned an extra 1,000 roubles? In fact, he receives money irregularly, now at the cashier's office, now by post. He receives payment for work done in 1990 and in 1989 and sometimes even for earlier years. And he has not yet become accustomed to recording all he has received – even without such registration he knows that he is far from earning 700 rubles per month, and as for the forgotten 1,000, the due tax was fully deducted by the publishing house. Thus, what should be done is to impose a fine for the concealment of the excess **calling for additional taxation** and demand the declaration on any incomes exceeding 8,400 rubles annually. In that case, the taxation inspection wouldn't need such an enormous number of employees doing absolutely useless work yielding the state no a single kopeck but drawing a handsome salary. It is as if the government wants to trespass the law and take away from people earnings not subject to additional taxation. In fact this is downright plunder and obvious lawlessness. But according to instuctions, this is the way it now goes.



Drawing by Victor Bogorad

Everywere in the world declarations on incomes are supplemented by declarations on **the expenses for professional activity,** and they are deducted from the sums subject to taxation. A writer needs paper, a typewriter, a computer, a Xerox machine and an office for work. He has to travel to the places where his characters live, and this too calls for expenses. Artists, composers, persons engaged not in creative but in individual labour activity have their professional expenses too. Not to reckon with this means to eradicate such an activity. But our taxation inspections and the Finance Minister and Prime Minister supervising them wish to disregard this.

What's more, when demanding information about incomes in hard currency the taxation inspection is **not interested at all whether the taxes had already been deducted from a person's pay at the place of payment.** In fact, with many countries, the Soviet Union has agreements on inadmissibility of double taxation, hence the taxation inspection disregards not only our internal laws, but also international agreements concluded by our country.

All these are no mere details affecting but a minority of Soviet citizens. What comes out in this case is one of the main feature of our life. The Law exists by itself. The Supreme Soviet adopted it and the President signed it. A.I. Lukyanov signed the resolution on putting the law into force. Everything seems to have worked out beautifully just like everywhere else in the world. But in reality, the existing practice is governed by all kinds of regulations and instructions issued by the executive authorities, rather than by law.

Today we talk over and over again about the need to strengten executive power. But as we can see, it is already strong in our country, stronger than any others and practically not limited at all. What really needs strengthening is the legislative and judicial powers so that the executive branch cannot disregard the law. They say that executive power must be strengthened in order to ensure general legality. But there is no guarantee it will do so. If a minister issue instructions disregarding the fact that the Supreme Soviet did not give him the right to come up with illegal innovations, if a general brings tanks into a city and opens fire at civilians having no order either from his minister or from the President, but following the request of a self-styled group of people, this creates neither order nor legality.

The executive branch must **execute** the law and nothing more. It has only to overstep the thin bounds of the law and the very idea of legality is destroyed. In everyday trifles, lawlessness becomes habitual, gains in strength and ruins the great country.

Poel Karp

Thirty-seven year old **Sazhi Umalatova,** team-leader of a complex brigade at the "Krasny Molot" machine-building plant in the city of Grozny and deputy to the House of Nationalities of the USSR Supreme Soviet, elected from the Soviet Communist Party, has received unprecedented popularity in the country after her speech at the 4th Congress of the USSR People's Deputies, in which she demanded Gorbachev's resignation. For this Sazhi was criticized from both the right and the left, she received thousands of letters in support of her speech and against it. She says that some letters even contained assassination threats.

This is how Sazhi Umalatova explains her speech at the Congress.

– There was a time when Mikhail Gorbachev said that in our country everyone should be happy and equal. I felt most sympathetic to him when he pronounced these words. But words remained words. And with each day people live worse and worse. We do not know what awaits us tomorrow.

Umalatova is a member of the "Soyuz" parliamentary group. Many people thought that her speech would reflect the position of that group, known for its conservatism. But it turned out that Sazhi had attended only one meeting of the group; when they talked about the need for defending the USSR, human rights and the equality of nationalities. She plans to leave the "Soyuz".

Asked about her attitude to the fact that at present hundreds of thousands of people are demanding that Gorbachev resign, though for different reasons, and whether she would support the demand now, Umalatova said: "Were my position any different I would never have spoken at the Congress."

* * *

Charity attracts people of various professions. A Moscow physician **Yevgeni Tabachnikov,** Cand.Sc. (Medicine) has been made Secretary of the recently founded independent international charity fund "Return to Father's Home." The son of a well-known Soviet composer Modest Tabachnikov has met many famous people at

his father's home, since his early childhood. Klavdiya Shulzhenko, Leonid Utesov, Lilya Brik and Dmitri Blagoi were among his father's guests.

Upon graduation from the First Medical Institute Yevgeni Tabachnikov worked for twenty years as an anaesthetist and resuscitator at the Central Institute of Traumatology and Orthopedics and then became a leading specialist in acupuncture. His hobby – Soviet art of the 30s – has become Yevgeni's second profession; he received recognition as an expert on the subject among Soviet and foreign art collectors. His new hobby is work for the fund, whose aim is "to promote the developing and strengthening of cultural ties with Russians abroad and help to bring Russian archives and other cultural riches home again." The fund's board includes Dmitri Likhachev, Galina Ulanova, Vladimir Krainev, Vladimir Spivakov and many personalities from the world of both art and science abroad. The fund's charity measures include a program of monthly actions to help children. They give real help to real children. For instance, the Fund brought New Year presents – booksand toys – to the children in a special boarding school suffering from scoliosis, where Yevgeni Tabachnikov worked as a consultant physician for many years.

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His 13th year as head of US secret service brought CIA director **William Webster** an unpleasant surprise. The US Congress raised the question of biased information on events in the Persian Gulf, supplied by the CIA. Democrat senators ac-

Injured in Lithuania

Thirty-three-year old Moscow correspondent for Spanish television, Catalan **Shavie Sitja,** is one of the journalists injured during the latest events in Lithuania.

"Our TV group arrived in Vilnius on January 9 and began working straight away," he says. "Around one in the morning on January 13 we heard shots being fired. We looked out of the window and saw ambulances rushing down the street. We took a taxi and headed for the Radio and TV headquarters. The building was surrounded by crowds of people, among them women and children, who were standing face to face with tanks, engines roaring. In front of the tanks stood close ranks of soldiers with submachine guns. They looked very young and were obviously very nervous. As soon as our cameraman Mikel Arragui took out his camera, two or three soldiers ran up to him. One of them grasped the camera and snatched it out of his hands, while another one fired into the air. Mikel instinctively threw himself to the ground. I tried to interfere but received a strong blow on the head with a truncheon and passed out for a minute. The Lithuanians who stood nearby helped me up and I came to only to see Mikel being clubbed. Luckily, the ambulance arrived in time.

"Of course, we realized that working in that situation was not safe," he continued. "Because it made no difference to the soldiers whether you were press or not – they were fulfilling orders. It seemed that their main enemies were TV cameras, which they were dilligently snatching from the hands of reporters. We waved good-bye to our camera. But this, of course, is not the main thing. What bothers me is that we have no record of the unbelievable courage of the people (among whom, incidentally, there were quite a lot of Russians), who were not afraid of the tanks and continued walking towards them. It was an entirely peaceful, civilian protest by which unarmed people wanted to demonstrate to the authorities their resolve to defend their right to freedom to the bitter end. But the authorities' reaction seemed to me inadequate, to say the least. All that reminded me of events in Spain ten years ago, when the military seized the parliament in Madrid and brought tanks on to the streets of Valencia. I must also say that, after the action in Lithuania, Gorbachev's prestige considerably diminished and not only in the Soviet Union. After all, even if the generals are exerting pressure on him, his position cannot be supported."

Shavie Sitja is a professional journalist who has worked in television for 15 years now, even since he graduated from the department of informational sciences at Barcelona University. His collegue Mikel Arragui is in Bilbao, where he is undergoing intensive treatment.

S. Muravyov

cused him of adapting his estimates to suit the President's political aspirations.

In a letter to Congress, which caused the debates, Webster said that economic sanctions against Iraq would not lead anywhere and would not make Saddam Hussein withdraw from Kuwait. Congressmen say that earlier Webster was of an entirely different opinion. What complicated the situation was that the views of the CIA Chief were made public when the American congressmen were discussing the possibility of combat operations in the Gulf. Webster's letter served as an argument in favor of starting the war.

The congressmen noted the need for watching the work of the intelligence in critical situations closely. At the same time they reminded Webster of the faulty estimate of economic growth in the Soviet Union, completed last November, and recalled the CIA blunders which led to the defeat in the Bay of Pigs in 1961. Democrat Senator Daniel Moynihan even spoke of his intention bring a bill on abolishing the CIA and transferring its functions to the State Department to discussion at the Senate.

Webster has been head of the CIA for 4 years now. Prior to this, between 1978 he headed the FBI. He is a professional lawyer and member of the American Bar Association.

M. Zaripov

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Thirty-nine year old **Zeev Wagner** is a member of the Association of Jewish Religious Professionals from the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe in Israel ("SHAMIR"), and Editor-in-Chief of the only Judaic publication in Russian in the world, *Vozrozhdenie* (Rebirth). An economist by education, Zeev left the Soviet Union 15 years ago.

He came back in order to help the National Union of Jewish Religious Intellectual Communities to develop spiritual education. He will edit the *Menora* newspaper. The future editor wants the paper to be of interest to everyone, not only Jews.

Zeev Wagner has already published 15 books in the Soviet Union in the series of Jewish religious literature in Russian. The books which sold like hot cakes, were popular among people of different nationalities and religious denominations. Wagner believes that only complete spiritual understanding can smooth over differences between nationalities and ethnic groups. He plans to expand the production of philosophic religious literature, and the newspaper he is to publish will carry a series of articles about the history of conflicts among different ethnic groups in the Soviet Union.

* * *

"Mister Darts" is the unoficial title given to **Victor Mironov** by darts fans. In 1989 Victor, who used to work for the social services, saw a performance of British darts aces, who came to Moscow to acquaint Soviet people with the game which has been familiar to every resident of British for time immemorial, on television.

Since then Victor has been popularizing darts in the USSR. He received a patent on the production of darts and dart boards whose quality is as high as of those manufactured in the West. At the world championship held in London last December the Soviet team hit targets with darts made according to Victor's design. It was a Soviet darts at such high ranking contest.

Victor Mironov who manufactured darts within the framework of the Poisk cooperative together with the Soviet-Dutch Good-luck venture, is now going to open a minor enterprise of his own. "My aim," he says, "is to provide everyone who wants one with a set of darts. The game reminds me of oriental gymnastics in its establishment of psychological balance, and, as far as excitement goes, it can be compared only to roulette."

An artist on ice

Tatiana Tarasova has set up not only a theatre on ice called All-Stars, but she created a new kind of art, which could leave no one cold.

When she was still working in sports her 4-minute long compositions could immediately be distinguished from all the others. Unbelievable expression plus the most complicated elements and what is most important – a wonderful feeling of form. Doing anything on a small scale is perhaps the most difficult thing to try both in music and ballet. Add to this numerous sport limitations. As for the theatre, it gives true freedom to the imagination and creative potential. The most daring, and almost unreal tasks, can be performed in the theatre, and this is the artistic credo of the All-Stars.

Tarasova never repeats herself, though her style is unique.

Tarasova is synonymous with the height of passions, struggles, life and loves. She, the worst enemy of passivity in art, draws everyone into her numerous plans and ideas and inspires people with her superhuman ability to work and her passionate love for her art.

The Stars have gone through fire and water. Now is their time of triumph. They've most successfully toured the US, Canada, Australia, New Zeland, Britain, France, Finland and just recently Turkey. Their cooperation with the famous British pair Dane Torville and Christopher Dean proved both interesting and tulfulling.

The company and its leader have a lot of fans all over the world. And here I would like to quote one of the most original and talented musicians of the world, leader of the Virtuosos of Moscow chamber orchestra V. Spivakov, who said: "Her ability not only to listen to music, but to hear it, not only to understand dancing as it is, but see and feel the philosophy and poetry of the dance – all this proves that Tarasova is a true Artist.

A. Yegizaryan,
Istanbul–Moscow

The "Society of Peace" and war

As this present twentieth century ends, the Soviet Union's newly emergent democracy and glasnost have been followed by the nightmare of inter-ethnic conflict, while the end to the cold war has been followed by the war in the Gulf. Wouldn't the idea of a non-violent world sound rather naive at a time when blood is being shed?

Anatoly Gorelov,
D. Sc. (Philosophy)

Yes, to some extent. But at a time when the scientific and technological revolution has served to evolve weaponry that may spell death to the earth, a championship of peace and even amateurish attempts to avert catastrophe are supremely essential. Hopes that technological sophistication would make war absurd have failed to materialize. Indeed, at the start of this century the Russian Prince Pyotr Dolgorukov exclaimed: "When electric energy of considerable tension may be transmitted by air could war be thinkable?" Yes, it is thinkable, and more even given nuclear weaponry. Not technological sophistication, but only man's striving for moral self-perfection can deter war. The new thinking and understanding of the world must oppose the new weaponry.

Wisdom and a sense of justice should be geared to the search for ways and means of securing a non-violent solution to conflicts. In these searches we should address ourselves to the great thinkers of the past, from Buddha to Leo Tolstoy and to the more recent non-violent actions of Mahatma Gandhi and Martin Luther King, which enjoin us to have faith that the A and H bomb have not plunged the human race into a hopeless quandary and that joint action can avert disaster. During the two Yasnaya Polyana walks of 1989 and 1990, sponsored by the Soviet Tolstoyan Society – and covered by *New Times* – the problems of a non-violent world order were debated time and again on the way and at many discussions. What should we do to prevent a conflict from gathering scope, especially when it develops into outright armed confrontation? Should we reply to violence with violence, and thus amplify violence throughout the world? Or should we, in a Christian-like manner, turn the other cheek, and agree to play the victim? Though scarcely can one offer a universal remedy today, we must clearly think and work on this, inasmuch as thought and intuition might suggest absolutely non-trivial solutions.

Our complex internal and international situation necessitates new ways and means of peace-making, perhaps a partial return to what has long been forgotten. From this angle I think we should consider the Society of Peace's constituent conference that its pressure group organized with the active backing of the Russian Federation Supreme Soviet Committee for Foreign Policy Links, the Moscow Tolstoyan Society, and the "Society of Friends and Mothers of Killed Soldiers" and "Ethics of Non-Violence" organizations, which was held on January 17 last in the building of the Russian Parliament on Moscow's Krasnaya Presnya Embankment.

Taken as its point of departure was the call issued in the Delhi Declaration that Mikhail Gorbachev and Rajiv Gandhi signed when the Soviet leader was in India. "Non-violence," it states, "should be the basis of community life: philosophy and policy based on violence and intimidation, inequality and oppression, and discrimination on the basis of race, religion or colour, are immoral and impermissible... Building a nuclear weapon-free and non-violent world requires revolutionary transformation of outlook and the education of people and nations in the spirit of peace, mutual respect and tolerance."

The Charter of the Society of Peace states that it is "an independent extra-party organization" operating "within the framework of the Constitutions of the Russian Federation and the Autonomous Republics." Its goals are to promote the attainment of universal peace and civic accord by ethical, social and legal means, and to revive Russia's culture and spirituality as the foundation for a humanitarian, non-violent world outlook. To secure these aims the Society will seek to evolve the philosophy of peace-making and study the history of the anti-war movement, and educate human minds to free them from spiritual aggression, evil, hatred, and "the image of the enemy." It will attempt to plant general human moral values in hearts and minds, establish amicable contacts with other peace-making organizations at home and abroad, institute links with compatriots abroad to attract their cultural, economic and scientific potential in order to aid Russia's rebirth, and finally, give moral, legal and material aid to victims of violence and all subjected to violence in one or another of its forms, by virtue of physical, social or intel-

lectual defencelessness. The Society's bedrock principle is a non-violent alternative to which end it will cooperate with every foundation, social organization, movement, group, party, enterprise, union of creative workers, and foreign international organizations whose activities do not run counter to its aims and principles.

The Society's newly-constituted board incorporates representatives from sponsoring organizations and the pressure group. Its Manifesto states: "History has shown that no really decent society can be built by evil, violence, blood and death. Evil only generates evil, violence leads to still more appalling violence. At each new phase of civilization mankind's noblest, honest minds embraced the idea of the non-violent alternative." The Society has also adopted an appeal in connection with the events in Lithuania and the war in the Gulf.

Drawing by Victor Kazachek

Pacifism is no easy task today, as Soviet people have been reared on the Marxian tenet that force is the midwife of history. This sounds very attractive, but note that a midwife never kills, but assists birth, whereas violence generates the opposite: its destructive impact is obvious, its creative effect problematical.

The Society of Peace has recreated a similarly named organization that existed in Russia in 1909-1914, and whose constituent assembly took place in Moscow on October 5, 1909. Led by the afore-quoted Prince Pyotr Dolgorukov, it had branches in St.Petersburg, Revel, and other cities. Similar societies existed in Warsaw and Kiev. The idea to found it came about in August 1908 when Leo Tolstoy's 80th birthday was marked. Its recreation was suggested on the 80th anniversary of Leo Tolstoy's death.

The purpose of the earlier Society was to "evolve and popularize the fundamentals of international law and propagate within the Society sound concepts as to international peace arbitration and international peace conferences." Russia's first pacifist journal *Vestnik Mira* (Herald of Peace) started in December 1912: its maiden issue stated "Pacifism's ideal is to replace the regime of war and force among nations by a legal order and international relations." However, the First World War and the revolution terminated the Society's activity.

Though the Society was instituted shortly after Nicholas II's widely publicized call for international peace, the tsarist government's top officials, Home Minister Sipyagin among others, did not hasten to endorse the Society's charter. It is quite possible that the Society's current restoration will likewise meet with resistance from the command system, despite Gorbachev's signing of the Delhi Declaration and his Nobel Peace Prize award.

A basic task for the Society is to try to overcome the ethnic conflicts in the Baltic states, Moldavia, Georgia and other republics. A Peace Mission will be set up to this end. Naturally, much will need to be published, more specifically literature concerned with the history of pacifism, and a textbook in ethics for schools and gymnasiums. It will also be necessary to strive for an alternative service option for conscripts, for bills forbidding troops to use force against peaceful civilians, and allowing soldiers to decline to take such action, for a Declaration on the protection of life.

A non-violent world crusade could represent an immediate object for the Society. As June 22 this year will mark the 50th anniversary of the beginning of the war known in the Soviet Union as the Great Patriotic War, the Moscow Tolstoyan Society suggests commemorating the date by launching an International Walk along the following route from Brest to Khatyn, to Solovki, to Valaam, to Leningrad, to Moscow to Yasnaya Polyana and to Optina Pustyn. The walk has been arranged so as to render tribute once aain to the memory of the country's defenders, the victims of fascist occupation, and repression against the Soviet people, war cripples and Leningrad siege participants, in short, all who died in the fighting or suffered horribly in peacetime. The basic purpose is to help prevent more wars on earth and entrench a non-violent world. Writers, scholars, journalists, philosophers, environmentalists,actors and war veterans are to take part. On the way they will meet the local population, hold discussions, lecture on problems of war and peace, and ecology, give recitals and generally engage in diverse peace-making activities.

The Moscow Tolstoyan Society would like to hear your thoughts and suggestions. All proposals as regards involvement and help to organize and finance this Walk should be addressed to the editorial offices of *New Times* and marked "For a Non-Violent World."

Finland's language woes

Not everybody is happy about official bilingualism in Finland

A foreigner truly feels like a foreigner roaming the streets of Helsinki: inscriptions and signs in Finnish are equally undecipherable for a Russian, a Briton, an Italian or a Turk. Even such international words as "telephone" and "restaurant," which are spelled almost identically throughout the world are "puhelin" and "ravintola" in Finnish. Once an isolated country, Finland is quickly becoming internationalized as a result of expanding economic and information relations with the world. However, the country's specific language remains a problem. Even in the Finno-Ugric family, to which Finnish belongs, it is linguistically related only to Estonian and Karelian. The second official language, Swedish, which is a traditional means of communication in Scandinavia, provides some help for foreigners, to whom the tricky Finnish remains too difficult.

Only six percent of Finnish citizens speak Swedish as a native language, but the constitution guarantees the Swedish community the right to attend Swedish schools and to establish cultural institutions, TV and radio programmes. The Swedish minority is fairly well represented in all social structure, especially business. Swedish may be used in communication with Finnish authorities, when you go shopping or chat with companions on a train. Although the share of Finnish Swedes is slowly decreasing, the popularity of the Swedish language is guaranteed by the constant inflow of Swedish Finns coming to their historical motherland.

Superficially, there seems to be no problem. However, opponents of the compulsory, or, as they call it, forced study of Swedish as a second official language, have been remarkably vocal recently. Specially vociferous is the Suomalaisuuden liitto, Union for the Development of Finnishness, which advocates preservation and purity of the Finnish national spirit, culture and ethnic awareness. The Union believes that the Swedish language in Finland should not have greater rights than the Finnish language in Sweden and that the study of the "difficult" Swedish language takes too much time and effort, distracting students from studying international languages such as English.

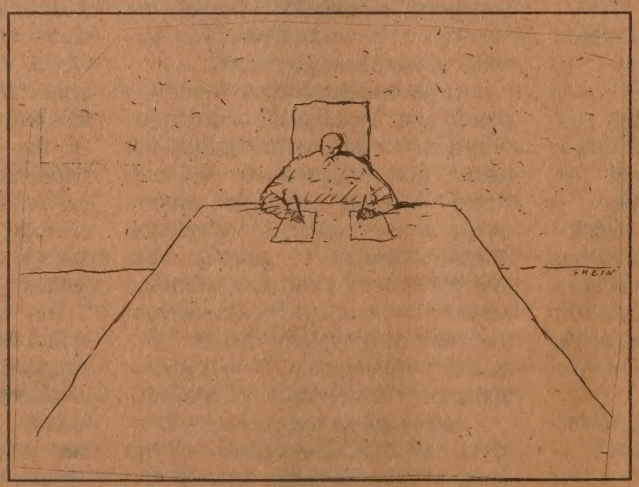
On the other hand, linguists believe that the more languages a young person studies, the easier it becomes to master each new language. Moreover, Swedish belongs to the Germanic family, which includes English and German and can help one master these languages. To illustrate this point, I would like to recall one episode in which a shop assistant could not understand what cakes I asked for in Swedish. My using English and Russian did not help either – the gorgeous blonde simply shook her head in irritation. At the end, I just pointed my finger at the brand I liked. When I retold the episode to a Finnish acquaintance for whom the cakes had been intended, he said resolutely: "The girl must have been a poor student."

Recently, the government submitted to parliament a report on the prospects of its policy in the field of education, which concluded that in the time of economic difficulties the country had to spend more on education. The report did not contain a word about changes in the status of the Swedish language, but Finnish purists from the parliamentary Culture Committee unexpectedly suggested that students be given freedom of choice so that they could decide whether they would or would not study Swedish. The suggested freedom of choice would reduce the now official Swedish language to just another foreign language in school curricula.

For the nation whose sovereignty is just a little over seven decades old and whose economic prosperity has developed only over the past 10 to 15 years, linguistic battles are not something abstractly academic. The Swedish crusades brought Christianity to Finland in the 12th century, Sweden ruled Finland for five centuries and the Swedish capital dominated the Finnish economy in the not too distant past. But now the Finnish nation has become economically developed and it is now a critical time for the reassessment of the role played by everything foreign.

Naturally, the government was quick to notice the real danger of the linguistic debate. Premier Harri Holkeri publicly spoke of how difficult it had been for him to study Swedish but how much the linguistic compulsion contributed to the all-round development of an individual. He was supported by many prominent figures in Finland. However, with parliamentary elections just around the corner, every MP has to reckon with the sentiments of his/her electorate and to prove being "a 100-percent Finn." The results of the parliamentary voting on the government report are viewed as an indicator of public opinion vis-à-vis the Swedish language.

The proposal from the Culture Committee was rejected: 157 MPs voted for the preservation of Swedish as an official language, and 30 MPs voted against. The results of the voting make the Swedish language's future as Finland's second official language bright. However, one must not disregard the calls for "Finnish purity," which are a long-term threat to full-fledged bilinguism. It must be recalled that demands have started to be heard in Finland for the return of the "lost" Karelia. These two tendencies may develop and strengthen each other because both of them are perfectly in tune with the calls to demolish the last remains of "imperial dominance" of Sweden and Russia.



Drawing by Igor Shein

Alexander Polyukhov,
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